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Lumbering in Southwest Louisiana: A Study of the Industry as a Cultero - Geographic Factor.

George Alwin Stokes

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LUMBERING IN SOUTHWEST LOUISIANA
A STUDY OF THE INDUSTRY AS A CULTURO-GEOGRAPHIC FACTOR

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of Geography
and Anthropology

by
George Alwin Stokes
A. B., Louisiana State Normal College, 1942
M. S., Louisiana State University, 1949
May, 1954

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ABSTRACT

This study is an inquiry into the nature, origin, and permanence of cultural forms and patterns peculiar to lumbering in southwest Louisiana. The area covered, one of the major forest districts of the state, was originally clothed in longleaf pine. It extends from Many southward to Lake Charles, and its eastern and western boundaries are set by the bottom lands of the Calcasieu and Sabine rivers. Here, as elsewhere in Louisiana, lumbering reached its peak in the early twentieth century. This intensive phase is geographically significant and merits close examination, since culture traits associated with lumbering were then being introduced.

Field study of these forms and patterns included interviews with former mill town residents and visits to active and abandoned company town sites. Information gained by interview was accurate and reliable, and the study could not have been otherwise accomplished. Aerial photographs and maps were examined, and a search made of the available literature.

The lumber industry entered the region from two directions, north and south. The extension of operations southward from Shreveport was part of the general march of the mills from the Lake States toward the Gulf then in progress. Lake Charles had become a major milling center years before, and was the base from which the industry

pushed north. As activities were extended along the new railroads, seven landscape elements were carried into the district: bungalows, pyramidal, shotgun, and log-pen houses, mill ponds, logging trams, and the racial division of settlements into "quarters."

The migration of these elements occurred along varying lines, and their degree of survival has not been uniform. The bungalow, native to French south Louisiana, was carried northward. It has grown in popularity and is universal in its distribution in Louisiana. Pyramidal houses were brought from the north and are now found in all parts of the state. The shotgun house entered the region from both north and south. Already known in French south Louisiana, it had been adopted by the industry in the north as well. Its popularity is declining, as is that of houses derived from the log cabins native to hill areas. ✓

Mill ponds and logging trams now have almost no economic value, due to changes in the nature of lumbering, and are becoming more obscure. Residential areas in towns where sawmills are still active are commonly divided into quarters today. Company houses in such quarters characteristically exhibit remarkable uniformity of construction.

Cultural changes wrought by lumbering are seen in rural areas, but are of greatest significance in urban centers. No other cultural invasion has matched the

impact of that industry. The complex of forms described dominates the southwest Louisiana landscape, and indicates the effectiveness of the industry as a culturo-geographic agent.

CHAPTER I

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND METHODOLOGY

Statement of the Problem: The purpose of this study was to investigate the lumber industry as it has progressed generally in Louisiana, and in particular as it has appeared in the longleaf pine district of southwest Louisiana during the general period 1895-1935, and, through this investigation, to learn what elements and patterns of a cultural nature were introduced, or adopted, and diffused through the area by the industry.

In more detailed terms the problem involved the following major phases:

- 1) the selection of an area for study;
- 2) the location of settlements within this area;
- 3) the study of these settlements;
- 4) the study of other elements and patterns associated with lumbering;
- 5) the identification of persistent elements and patterns;
- 6) the written, photographic, and cartographic presentation of these elements and patterns.

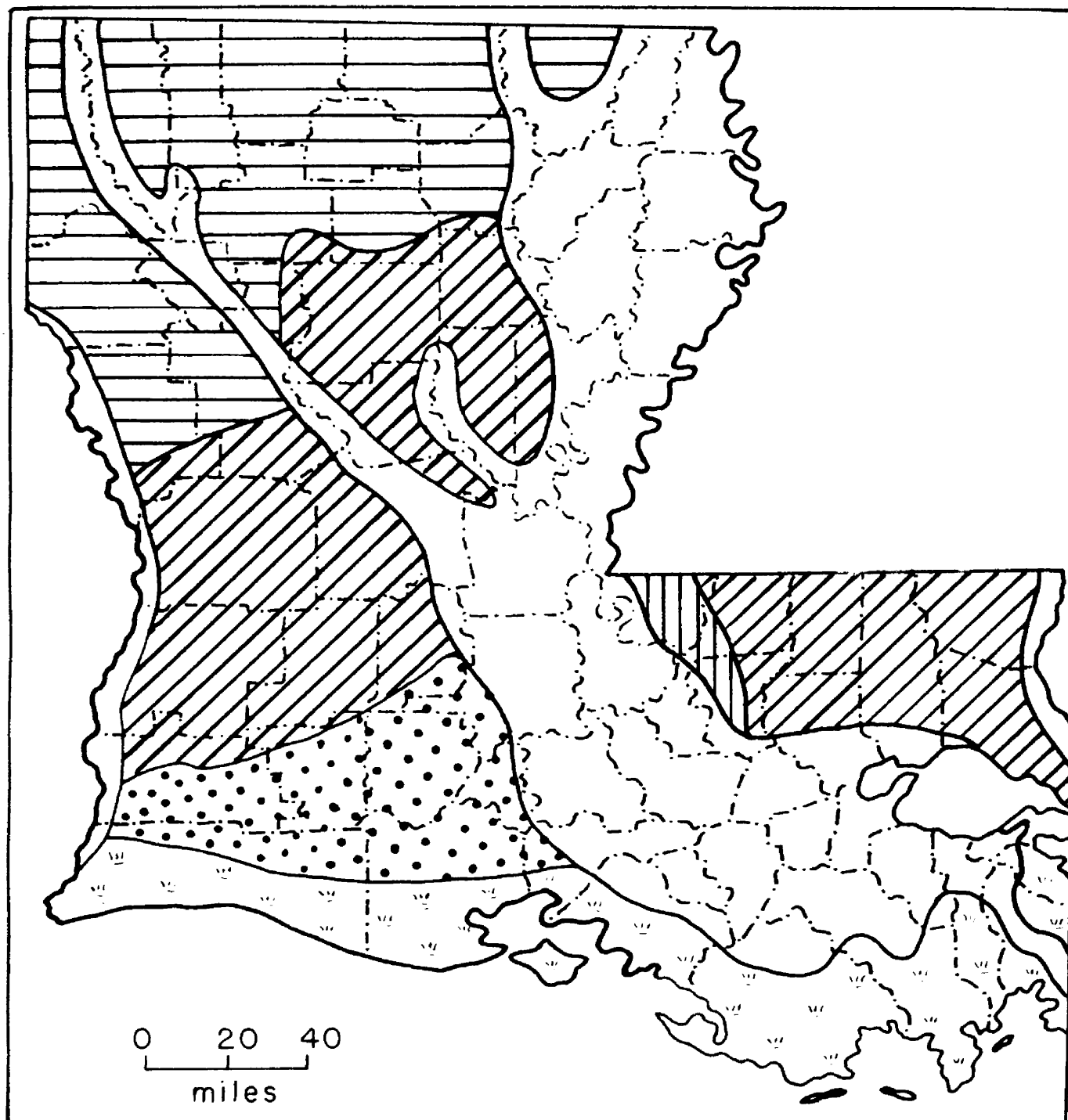
Importance of the Study: Nothing done by man has more drastically altered the natural background or has more closely shaped the man-made setting of life in large areas

of Louisiana than the brief but vigorous activities of the great lumber companies of the early twentieth century. In many places there remain the original structures of the period--houses, towns, and railroads--and people still use them, people who, in some cases, knew the sawmill towns and the virgin forests of the past. While these structures may be seen, and while people live to tell of them, they should be found, studied, and recorded.

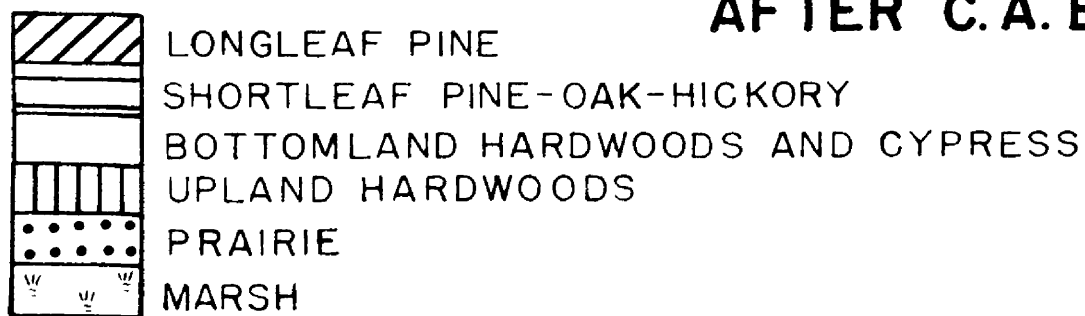
It is felt that the completion of this study, covering one of the major forest districts of Louisiana, will enhance the store of geographic knowledge of the state and contribute toward a more complete understanding of the contemporary complex of cultural forms. Perhaps it will smooth the path of those who may undertake studies of other parts of the state where the work of the lumberman has been no less significant.

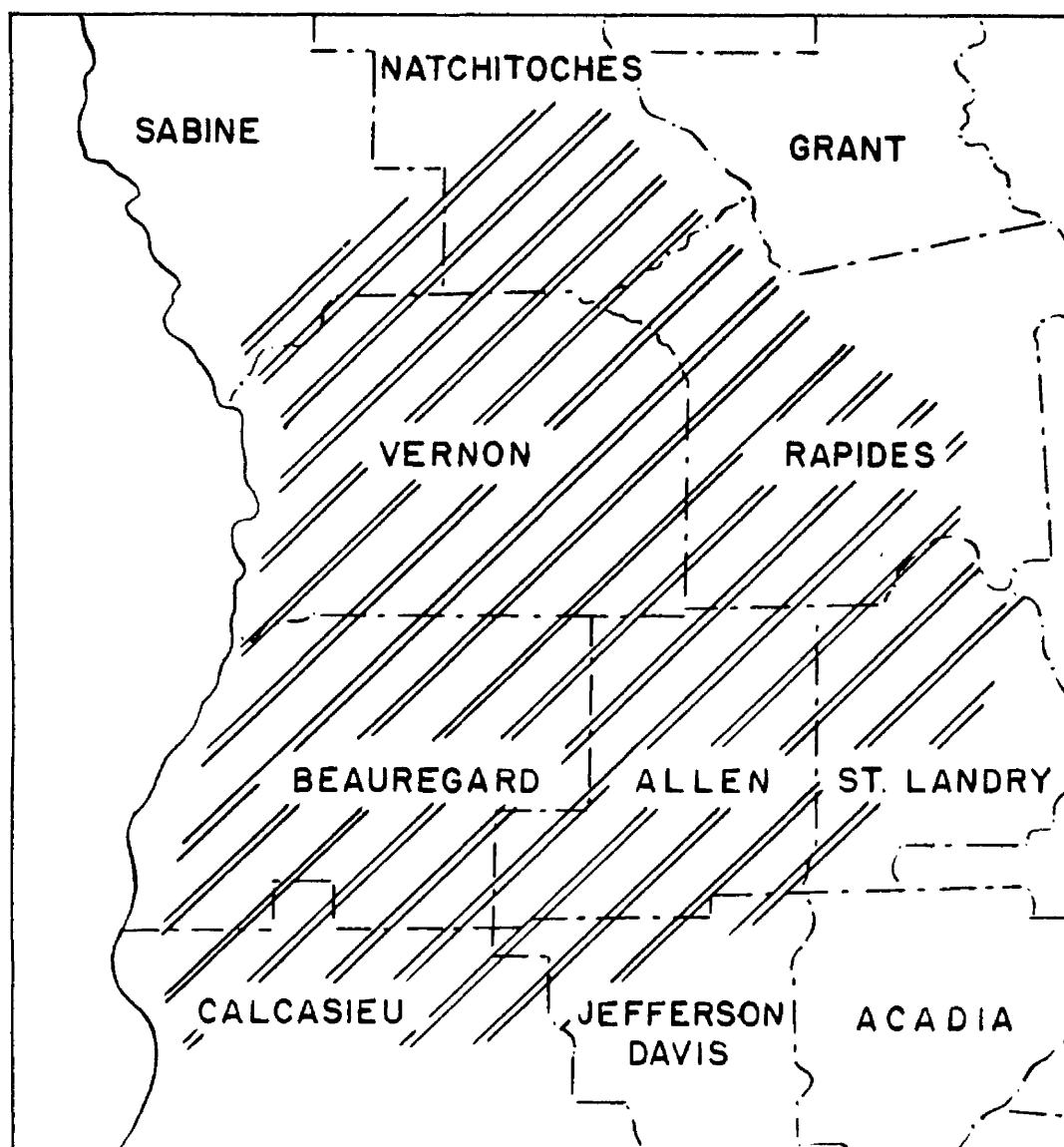
Selection of an Area for Study: The area selected for this study was the longleaf pine district of southwest Louisiana as outlined by Brown.¹ His map indicates the forest regions of Louisiana as they originally stood, unchanged by man. As the accompanying maps indicate (Plates I and II), the district chosen included essentially that

¹Clair A. Brown, Louisiana Trees and Shrubs (Baton Rouge: Louisiana Forestry Commission Bulletin No. 1, 1945), p. 6.



LOUISIANA TREE REGIONS AFTER C.A. BROWN





SOUTHWEST LOUISIANA
LONGLEAF PINE DISTRICT

AFTER BROWN



Plate 17

portion of Louisiana lying between Many, Sabine Parish, to the north, and De Quincy, Calcasieu Parish, to the south. The western boundary was set by the bottom lands of the Sabine River, while to the east longleaf pine extended roughly to the line Natchitoches-Alexandria-Oberlin.

This study is an investigation of certain man-made elements and patterns, and not an attempt to delineate any particular area or region on a culturo-geographic basis, hence the chosen area provides good and distinct natural boundaries for the study.

The district chosen was attractive to lumbermen. It is large, embracing all or parts of nine parishes, and extends across a range of climatic and geologic variation, but holds within its bounds a constant element: the pine forests. All settlements and other establishments fixed here by the lumber industry had one function and objective: the processing of longleaf pine.

Southwest Louisiana was thinly populated prior to the advent of intensive lumbering. The industrial complex of towns and railroads was thrust into largely virgin territory, and was not absorbed by forms and patterns of earlier human occupancy. Also, since the conclusion of this phase of industrial activity, there have occurred no major cultural readjustments which might have obscured the contributions of lumbering to the landscape.

Selection of Settlements: All the settlements chosen for consideration in this study were, from the beginning, sawmill towns. Wherever the lumbermen carried on their work of exploitation they set up communities designed for the accomplishment of that task alone. Sometimes they were attached to the fringes of pre-existing settlements, but often they consisted of entirely new urban assemblages. Where the latter were built the area felt the full impact of the cultural invasion. Here the forms related to the industry can be observed as they were originally built, under conditions minimizing the influence of previous human activity.

Lumber camps,² smaller communities set up by the mill operators, were not extensively investigated in this study. These tiny settlements near the area of active logging were occupied by woods crews and, occasionally, their families. They were extensions of the parent towns.

The elements of size and population were not considered in selecting settlements for study. All had the same basic function, and in each there were certain fundamental forms. With increasing size these forms became more complex, more elaborate, and more numerous.

The only criterion called into service in settlement selection was their origin: were they, or were they not, established as sawmill towns?

²For explanation of this and other terms, see Glossary.

Locating the Sawmill Towns: Although most sawmill towns in the longleaf district of southwest Louisiana came into being less than sixty years ago, their sites have already become difficult to find. Some such towns were probably not found, even after lengthy investigation.

Throughout this portion of the study the knowledge that the lumbering and logging operations of the time were based almost exclusively upon railroad facilities was of primary significance. This being the case, an early and essential step was the examination of maps showing the rail lines of the area at different periods, particularly about 1920.

Some basic sections of the former railway net are still in use. The Kansas City Southern, extending southward from Many to Lake Charles, the Texas and Pacific southeast from Mansfield to Alexandria, and the Missouri Pacific southwestward from Alexandria to Lake Charles were all essentially complete, though perhaps under different names, before the period of intensive logging. They served as a framework on which was built the complex transport net of 1920.

Aerial photographs were of great help in the preliminary search, prior to the beginning of field work. The photos revealed abundant evidence of sites formerly occupied by company towns, such as street patterns, mill ponds, and converging logging railways.

Most readily apparent were the mill ponds, usually distinguishable by their size from the smaller ponds provided for cattle. Field checks, however, indicated that ponds afforded at best an incomplete picture of settlement locations. Some sawmill plants did not include ponds, and broken dams have led to the disappearance of others.

The size and shape of ponds could not always be employed as sure criteria of their origin. Some are large, consisting of stream waters impounded behind earthen dams. The Alco pond, irregular in outline, had a width of some 150 yards and was about 600 yards long. This pond contrasts sharply with the small rectangular pond dug at Woodworth.

The only standard of judgement afforded by the ponds lay in their relation to the railroads. The presence of large artificial ponds in close proximity to rail lines was generally indicative of former mill sites.

Logging trams and spurs appear in many aerial photographs, and served as another guide to former mill town sites. At ground level the old roadbeds are generally obscure, since they were rather impermanent structures for the most part, and long in disuse. Frequently these lines were seen to converge toward some central point, which often proved to be an abandoned town site. Traces of former occupation not noted earlier were sometimes revealed through close study of areas of convergence.

Street plans constitute the best indicator of the

nature of an abandoned site. Wherever extensive street patterns were noted the assumption was made that the settlement had been a sawmill town. No other activity in the area has led to the abandonment of sizable population centers. Unfortunately, street patterns were rarely seen, since sites were frequently so overgrown as to be most indistinct.

United States Geological Survey quadrangles were of some assistance in the initial search for mill sites. The map sheets indicated mill ponds and trams, though incompletely.

A list of sawmill towns in southwest Louisiana, some only tentatively identified as such, was developed from the study of air photos, maps, and available literature. This list, used in conjunction with older maps of the area, made possible the preparation of a map showing the mill town sites.

Final identification of the mill locations was made by questioning persons who had worked and lived in the company settlements. Informants at Fisher, a mill town still active, revealed the names of sawmill towns in considerable numbers, confirming the identity of some already located and naming others which had not been found.

Railway station agents proved to be particularly helpful informants in this regard. Most are quite familiar

with the towns along the rail lines where they have been employed.

Periodicals and other literature in general proved to be of very little assistance in locating the mill sites. References to specific localities were scarce, and usually failed to identify a settlement as one established by the lumber industry.

No method of search proved more effective than questioning individuals who had had personal experience with the lumber industry. Most of these people had lived in several sawmill towns, moving from one to another as the fortunes of the industry rose and fell. Field investigation completed and made certain the location and identification of the sawmill towns.

Settlement Study Methods: The acquisition of detailed information concerning the sawmill towns in the area studied involved work along several lines. All had the single aim of creating a picture of each settlement as it appeared during its usually short lifetime.

The elements making up the "picture" of each town included descriptions of the establishments obtained from former inhabitants or publications, maps of the settlements, and photographs of the remaining evidences of habitation found at the town sites. The information obtained from these sources is presented in Appendix A.

This study would have been impossible without the wealth of first-hand information contributed most willingly by the many people interviewed. Other sources were rewarding, but proved wholly inadequate in satisfying the requirements of a close investigation.

For the most part informants were white males who had held jobs in one or more of the towns studied. Numbers of them filled positions of some responsibility, and their recollections were detailed and clear. Other informants included white women and Negroes of both sexes. All had lived in company towns and shared a close association with the lumber industry. They represented a good cross-section of the mill workers and mill town residents, since they included commissary clerks, steel-gang workers, locomotive engineers, quarter-bosses, and others of similarly varied experience in town and forest. In almost every case they seemed to recall life in the sawmill towns with real affection, and were more than willing to talk about a subject which, to them, represented the "good old days." In fact, it was sometimes difficult to bring an interview to a close. The writer was uniformly treated with courtesy, and was often invited into homes where he had the privilege of examining snapshots, maps, and other items which contributed to his understanding and knowledge of the settlements and their people.

It is felt that the bulk of the information gained

by interview is reliable. The fact that a date may have been given incorrectly by a few years, that a name might have been recalled imperfectly, is of little significance in a study of this kind. Several informants were interviewed in connection with each town, and their statements coincided well. When circumstances permitted, the results of interviews were checked against publications, a test which served to enhance the reliability of the former.

Early in the course of this study a check sheet was developed for use during interviews. After a number of conversations with informants it was realized that the amount of information being collected could not be trusted to memory for even short periods. Conversations were often lengthy, and when such detailed inquiries were made, at least the essentials of the material gathered had to be recorded at once. In all some forty specific items were covered. The check sheets served the questioner in another capacity: when answers were indicated in each blank on the form, it was certain that at least the most essential topics had been covered, and that the interview was in large measure complete. A sample check sheet is shown at the end of this chapter.

No objections to the use of check sheets during interviews were experienced. Their necessity was explained to the informants, and in most cases they seemed to prefer the specific questions, especially at the beginning of the

interview. The sheets could be filled in with a minimum of distracting movement, a plus sign serving to indicate an affirmative answer, a zero a reply of negative character. The informants, as the interview progressed, were encouraged to assume the conversational lead, which they usually did without reluctance.

A portion of the check sheet was reserved, under the heading "Remarks," for notes of special interest. With the informant's aid sketch maps were drawn on the reverse sides of the sheets. Later these were compared with air photos and quadrangles, and brought into more correct proportion and orientation.

Maps and aerial photographs served primarily as sources of information supplementary to the interviews. Informants were sometimes able, with these visual aids, to point out such things as street plans, specific building sites, and sections occupied by the various racial groups. Such information was often recorded directly on the map or photo. Maps and air photos were also valuable in providing accurate cartographic bases on which maps of the settlements were reconstructed.

The writer visited each sawmill town site at least twice. Abundant evidence of former settlement was often found, houses, mill foundations, ponds, dams, and other indications of the location and general nature of

the community. Fisher and Elizabeth are still in existence, and visits to these active company towns were rewarding.

Knowledge derived from local newspapers, parish histories, and similar sources was negligible compared to that obtained by interview, and was chiefly of value in the preparation of the general history of lumbering in Louisiana which appears in Chapter III.

SAMPLE CHECK SHEET

Town:	Estab:	Cut out:
-------	--------	----------

Parish:	Photo:	Quadrangle:
---------	--------	-------------

Lbr. Co:	People from:
----------	--------------

House types: (white)	(Negro)
----------------------	---------

Railroads:

Forms present (plus for yes, zero for no)

boarding house (w) (N)

school (w) (N)

commissary

Offices

machine shop

mill pond reserve

corral

barn

hardwood mill

pine mill

planer mill

kilns

lumber yard

standpipe

generators

ice house

depot

church (w) (N)

doctor's office

drug store

barber shop

theater

postoffice

cemetery (w) (N)

REMARKSOther:

mules

oxen

rod engines

shays

steam skidders

Map on back

CHAPTER II

THE SOUTHWEST LOUISIANA LONGLEAF PINE DISTRICT

That portion of southwest Louisiana originally clothed in longleaf pine presented in its virgin state a view of natural wealth and bounty at least equal to, and in many ways surpassing, anything the lumbermen had seen up to that time. The general physical attributes of that portion of the state, and the qualities of longleaf pine make these attractions obvious.

Longleaf pine (Pinus palustris), often called "yellow pine," has been described as the most important timber tree of southern United States.¹ Its unique combination of properties has made it highly useful to man, and has led to the removal of the southern stands.

This tree grows slowly, gaining perhaps one-quarter inch in diameter yearly, and requiring 250-300 years for the development of a trunk diameter of thirty inches.² Wahlenburg states that in the Calcasieu region of Louisiana, and as far north as Vernon and Rapides parishes, old-growth trees averaged about 110 feet in height and twenty inches in diameter.³ Most of the better logs were cut from trees

¹J. E. Berry, Southern Woodland Trees (Chicago: World Book Co., 1924), p. 32.

²Ibid., p. 34.

³W. G. Wahlenburg, Longleaf Pine (Washington: Charles Lathrop Pack Forestry Foundation, 1948), p. 213.

ranging in age from 150 to 200 years. This land west of the Mississippi was said to have the best timber.⁴

The wood is suited for many uses. It is attractive, and heavy, hard, durable, and strong, and not subject to warping or checking. In old-growth trees from one-half to two-thirds of the trunk are free of limbs, or "clear." These various qualities make the wood useful for such dissimilar purposes as bridge timbers, ship and railroad-car construction, furniture, siding, and interior house finishing.

Another property of the tree, resulting literally in its downfall, was the nature of the original stands. The longleaf forests were remarkable for their clean, open appearance, almost entirely free of undergrowth. Photographs of virgin longleaf stands indicate that they had the character of well-kept parks (see Figure 1). Forbes mentions that old settlers recounted how buggies could be driven through the woods without difficulty.⁵

Longleaf stands were notably pure, usually eighty per cent or more. A stand is considered "pure" if seventy-five per cent of the trees in it are of one species.⁶ Old

⁴J. H. Foster, "Forest Conditions in Louisiana," Forest Service Bulletin 114 (Washington: United States Department of Agriculture, 1912), p. 6.

⁵H. B. Forbes, "The Why and the How of Forestry in Louisiana," Department of Conservation Bulletin No. 13 (New Orleans: State of Louisiana, 1921), p. 16.

⁶Wahlenburg, op. cit., p. 46.



Figure 1: Pure stand of longleaf pine,
Rapides Parish, Louisiana.

growth pine stands averaged twelve to thirty thousand board feet of lumber per acre over whole townships.⁷ Along drainage lines longleaf gave way to narrow strips of other species of pine or hardwoods, usually less than two miles wide. The transition zone from longleaf to other timber types was characteristically very narrow, generally not more than a mile in width.⁸ This purity of stand was largely the result of the frequent fires which swept the area, fires set by nature, and more often by man. Fires were small, their frequency precluding the accumulation of forest litter. Crown fires were almost unknown.⁹

Longleaf seedlings are unusually fire resistant, while other species are easily killed. Fires in protected forests are much more damaging to young trees. At Urania a second-growth area containing blackjack oak, loblolly, slash, and some longleaf was deliberately burned after a winter rain. Practically all growth was killed, except longleaf seedlings, and this again became the dominant species.¹⁰ Other experiments have indicated the effects of

⁷ I. F. Eldredge, "Southern Forests Then and Now," Journal of Forestry, L (1952), 183.

⁸ F. V. Emerson, "The Southern Long-leaf Pine Belt," Geographical Review, VII (1919), 81.

⁹ R. H. D. Boerker, Behold Our Green Mansions (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1945), p. 239.

¹⁰ H. H. Chapman, "Results of a Prescribed Fire at Urania, Louisiana, on Longleaf Pine Land," Journal of Forestry, XLV (1947), 121.

fire on mixed forests, and have even shown that longleaf seedlings will grow more rapidly in burned areas, where plant diseases are less active.¹¹

According to Wahlenburg:

"In the natural succession of forest types longleaf pine forms a subclimax maintained through frequent burning of the forest floor. Fire furnishes the primary control of distribution of longleaf pine under natural conditions, but its action is largely felt through effects on competing species."¹²

To other desirable qualities this longleaf district joined the advantage of great size. Its boundaries might roughly be represented by the area enclosed within a line drawn from Many southeastward almost to Alexandria, south and west to Oberlin and Lake Charles, west to Vinton, and finally north again to Many. Its dimensions are about ninety miles from north to south, with a maximum width of some sixty-five miles.

Geological conditions here favor the growth of longleaf pine, and facilitate logging activities. Bands of sedimentary rock outcrop in the area, striking generally northeast, and dipping gently southward. In the north, around Fisher, small portions of the Jackson and Claiborne groups (Eocene) supported longleaf forests, but the greater

¹¹P. C. Wakely and H. H. Muntz, "Effect of Prescribed Burning on Height and Growth of Longleaf Pine," Journal of Forestry, XLV (1947), 503.

¹²Wahlenburg, op. cit., p. 55.

forest areas lay southward on successively younger sediments. Penfound notes that:

"In general, the Eocene was originally characterized by shortleaf pine, whereas the Oligocene and Miocene were clothed with longleaf pine. The Pleistocene included longleaf pine, hardwoods, and prairie communities. The recent deposits included neither pine forest nor prairie communities, however."¹³

According to Brown:

"The region was studied in connection with Fisk's geological map (1938) and a strong correlation was found between the geology and the vegetation. The longleaf pine was on the terrace deposits and absent from the Vicksburg formation . . ."¹⁴

Most of this area was well-drained and sandy, conditions which favored the growth of longleaf while adversely affecting competing species. Soil moisture is second only to fire as far as the distribution of longleaf pine is concerned.

Southwest Louisiana presented no topographic breaks which might have constituted real obstacles to logging. The highest ground occurs in southeastern Sabine and northern Vernon parishes, where elevations exceed 450 feet in some places. From these Tertiary hills elevations

¹³W. T. Penfound, "Plant Distributions in Relation to the Geology of Louisiana," Proceedings, Louisiana Academy of Sciences, (1943), p. 27.

¹⁴Clair Brown, "Historical Commentary on the Distribution of Vegetation in Louisiana, and Some Recent Observations," Proceedings, Louisiana Academy of Sciences, (1943), p. 45.

decrease southward, the 25-foot contour line roughly marking the southern limit of longleaf. In almost all portions the district presents the appearance of low, gently rolling hills. According to Hartman: "This region represents the easiest logging of any in the United States or Canada."¹⁵

Most of the section is drained by the Calcasieu with its many tributaries joining it from the north and west. The rail line from Leesville to De Quincy fairly well marks the drainage divide, the area west of the line generally draining into the Sabine River. Many of the streams are intermittent, and most are easily bridged.

Climate plays no great part in determining the distribution of longleaf pine.¹⁶ The tree is found in regions where mean annual temperatures range from 63° to 73°.¹⁷ More important is rainfall, the tree requiring heavy summer rains to offset moisture losses by evaporation from sandy soils and transpiration during the long growing season.

Such a climate placed no restrictions on logging. There was no cold season severe enough to stop operations, and if heavy rains halted work in one place, it could be temporarily resumed in a better-drained area.

¹⁵ G. B. Hartman, "The Calcasieu Pine District of Louisiana," The Ames Forester, X (1922), 65.

¹⁶ Wahlenburg, loc. cit.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 51

In describing the conditions which attracted the lumber industry to Louisiana mention should be made of the two other large longleaf pine districts then present in the state. One lay in north Louisiana, centering in Winn, Caldwell, and La Salle parishes, the other in the Florida parishes of eastern Louisiana.

The lumberman has not been the only foe of longleaf pine. Insects, fungi, and razorback hogs have done great damage. Some land was cleared for farms, some was cut by the early sawmillers and by farmers who sold logs to eke out a poor crop. In the south forests were damaged by hurricanes. Forbes mentions "harrican" timber,¹⁸ and extensive stands near Merryville were blown down in 1918.¹⁹

However, the longleaf district primarily fell victim to large-scale sawmilling. Physical conditions prevalent in the region and the highly desirable qualities of longleaf pine are the reasons why such a vast forest was consumed in so short a time, and indirectly suggest how overwhelming must have been the invasion of the mills.

¹⁸Forbes, op. cit., p. 9.

¹⁹E. Kerr, "Pine Tree Cowboys Start a New Era," Forests and People, II (1952), 15.

CHAPTER III

HISTORY OF LUMBERING IN LOUISIANA

The lumber industry in Louisiana has progressed through several stages, the occurrence and duration of each depending upon factors which have influenced the activities of lumbermen.

One such factor was the demand for southern timber. Southern forest resources remained comparatively untouched until forests in the north were exhausted. Before 1880, for the most part, southern forest tracts had been required to fill only local demands. Relatively small quantities of lumber had been shipped outside the region. However, when the forests of the northern states were gone, emphasis shifted southward, and lumbering here entered its most spectacular and destructive phase. 31

The availability of timber was another factor influential in the progress of lumbering in Louisiana. As long as large tracts of timber remained, the big mills could be supplied in quantity sufficient to keep them operating at top capacity. The mills had to run continuously, or they lost money.

Still a third factor affected lumbering: transportation. For generations practically all timber moved in Louisiana had gone down the waterways of the state. The method was slow, but the requirements of the time were satisfied.

Only the railroads could move logs fast enough over considerable distances to supply the mills, or carry away the tremendous volume of lumber they produced. In the space of a few years railroads had been built through the great timber regions.

When the forests were so depleted that the large mills were obsolete, the motor truck became the mainstay of Louisiana lumbering, as it is today. Small mills could operate on the sparse timber left, supplied by the mobile and inexpensive truck.

Thus lumbering in Louisiana has experienced three major stages or phases: an early phase, during which demand was small and logging operations were largely confined to areas along streams; a middle phase, the era of intensive logging, when the railroad became the prime mover; and a final stage, the present, dominated by the small portable mill and its servant, the motor truck.

Early Phase: During the initial period of forest exploitation in Louisiana, lumbering, as an industry, was restricted to lands adjacent to waterways. No other means of moving logs in quantity existed.

Mills of the time were small, and at first lumber was produced by whipsawing, often with slave labor.¹ Such

¹A. E. Wackerman, Harvesting Timber Crops, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1949), p. 21.

mills were scattered widely along the Mississippi and other streams in Louisiana. As early as 1803, however, a steam-powered mill was reportedly built in New Orleans, only to be burned by men who feared that the new machinery would throw them out of work as sawyers.²

As settlements were pushed up the principal waterways of the state, the number of sawmills grew. In their excellent history of Northeast Louisiana the Williamsons mention the establishment of a sawmill near the present northern portion of Monroe about 1795.³ By 1810, according to the census of that year, there were forty-three sawmills operating in Louisiana. By 1840 this number grew to 139.⁴

One of these early mills was operated on Bayou Boeuf near Alexandria by the Bowie brothers, John, Rezin, and James, in 1815. Oak, ash, and cypress were cut and sent down to Baton Rouge via the Boeuf, Red, and Mississippi.⁵ Douglas also mentions the presence of sawmills along the streams around Opelousas in 1802.

²"New Orleans--Important Lumber Center, Specializing in Export Trade," Southern Lumberman, CXLIV (1931), 137.

³F. W. and L. H. Williamson, Northeast Louisiana, Monroe, Louisiana: Historical Records Association, 1930, p. 49.

⁴S. F. Horn, This Fascinating Lumber Business, (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1951), p. 28.

⁵C. L. Douglas, James Bowie, (Dallas: Banks, Upshaw and Company, 1944), p. 9.

A steam sawmill was cutting pine and cypress at Point Pleasant in Morehouse Parish in 1840,⁶ and in 1868 Captain Billy Robinson built a mill at Shreveport. Timber cut in the fall was rafted down to this mill on the Red River's spring rises.⁷

In supplying the mills of these early years rafting operations were conducted on a large scale, and the method was applied to the finished products of the mills as well as logs. In the 1880's eleven million wooden pipe staves were floated down the Ouachita from Columbia in a single tow.⁸

Although pine had been floated down to New Orleans as early as 1850, 1880 is generally regarded as the big year of rafting in southeastern Louisiana. In that year logs cut in eastern Louisiana were towed across Lake Pontchartrain and through the canals to New Orleans mills. Logs were also rafted out of the Red, Little, Black, and other tributaries to the Mississippi.⁹

The streams of southwestern Louisiana served as timber roads feeding some of the first large mills of the state and probably eclipsed other streams in this respect.

⁶Williamson, op. cit., p. 71.

⁷James Boyd, "Fifty Years in the Southern Pine Industry," Southern Lumberman, CXLV (1931), 27.

⁸Williamson, op. cit., p. 112.

⁹"New Orleans," op. cit., p. 137.

Around Lake Charles water transport of logs was an old story when mills farther inland were just getting into production.

Logs moved down the streams of southwest Louisiana were of both cypress and longleaf pine. Cypress was cut during the fall and early winter, when the bottom lands were usually dry. The limbs were removed when the timber was cut, and by the time the spring rises came the logs were fairly dry. At the time of cutting roads were cleared through the swamp growth. When the water rose in the spring the logs floated, and were led through the roads to the main stream channels. In other cases, where timber was some distance from the stream, logs were cut and hauled by oxen to a place along the bank where they might be easily rolled off the wagons directly into the channel. These unloading points were called "dumps," and numbers of them were used continuously for years.

Spring was the active season of log transport along the southwestern streams. The Calcasieu could be counted on for at least one freshet a year, usually in June, and in 1885 a single rise in that river carried between forty and fifty thousand logs southward. So many logs went downstream that many could not be stopped, even though several booms were put across the river. Large numbers of logs went all the way to the Gulf.¹⁰

¹⁰Boyd, loc. cit.

The Sabine carried logs southward from Bayou Anacoco to Orange.¹¹ Old settlers tell of seeing rafts on the Sabine made up entirely of longleaf pine, and up to one and one-half miles long. These were narrow rafts, consisting of several logs bunched together in a small group, with other log groups attached to the rear, forming a chain rather than a solid raft or mass of logs. Some large logs would not float, and were spiked to cross-pieces laid across two floaters, like yokes. Logs went down the Sabine to mills at Deweyville, Orange, and other places along the river's lower reaches.

For the most part river boats were used to move logs for only short distances in southwest Louisiana. A few were operated on the lower Sabine, and others towed logs from the Calcasieu bays across Lake Charles to mills around the lake.

Toward the end of the century lumber production in Louisiana was beginning to grow, although the peak output was to be attained only after the railroads came. Some of the first big mills were supplied by water. In 1892 one of the Krause and Managan Lumber Company mills on the lower Calcasieu cut 148,000 board feet of lumber in eleven hours.¹²

¹¹Vernon Parish Resources and Facilities (Baton Rouge: State of Louisiana Department of Public Works, 1949), p. 8.

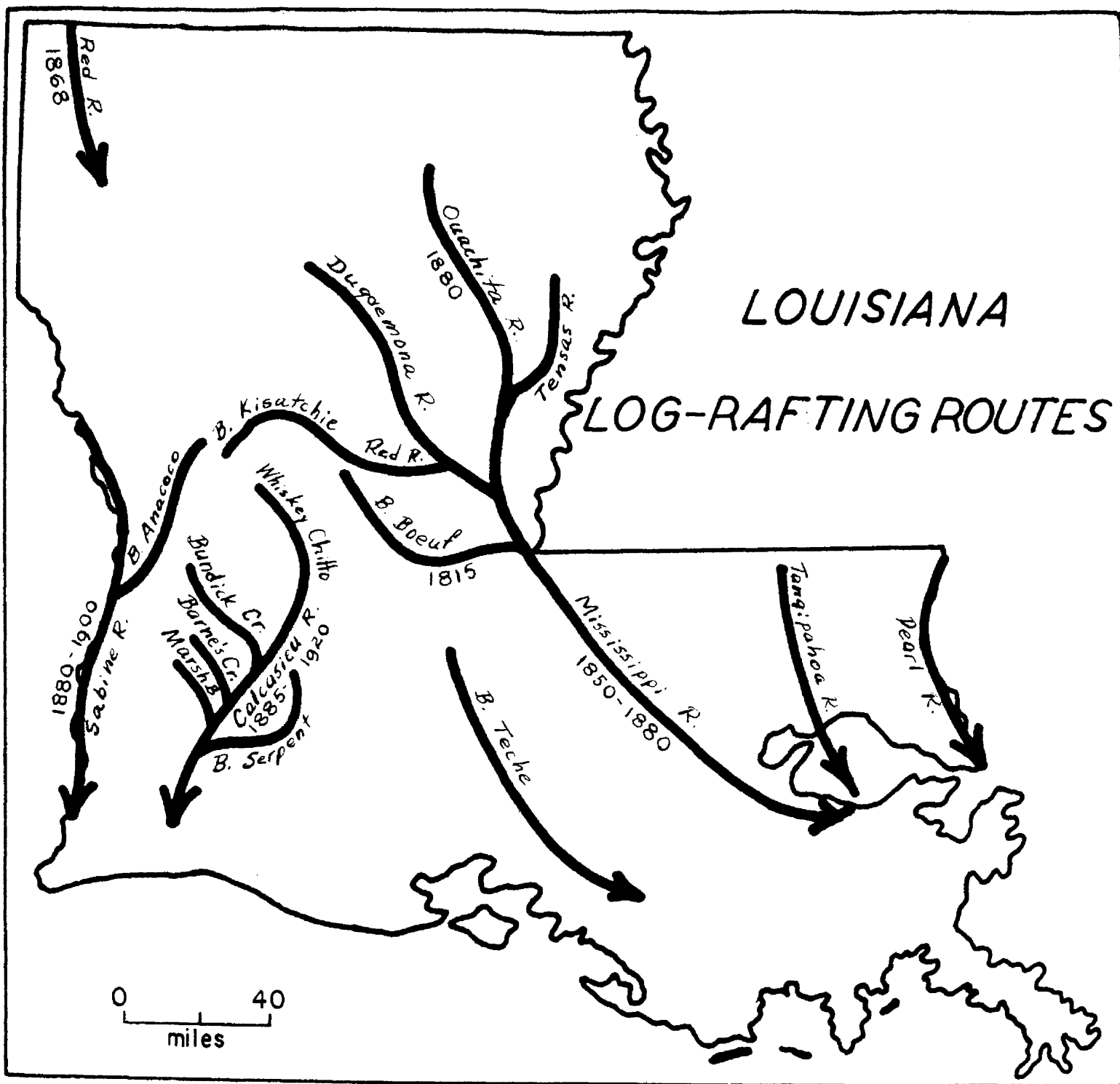
¹²Boyd, loc. cit.

The map on page 31 (Plate III) illustrates, in part, the routes along which logs were rafted in Louisiana. The writer made no effort to cover this subject in its entirety.

At times the waterways of Louisiana harbored some of the more unscrupulous lumbermen active in the South. By 1860 timber stealing on government land was common inland from Atchafalaya Bay and along the Calcasieu and Pearl rivers. Floating sawmills, frequently moved and easily hidden, were operated on the fringes of the forests. On one occasion a Federal agent seized 100,000 illegally cut logs on Lake Charles. These had been cut by Henry J. Latcher for the West Indies trade. Before the question of ownership of the logs had been decided in favor of the United States the agent was forced to call for a revenue cutter to patrol the lake and for regular troops to guard the logs.¹³

Timber speculators were among the first to recognize the impending shift of lumbering to the southern states. By 1870 two thirds of Louisiana timber was in the hands of some sixteen organizations. Nathan Bradley of Michigan bought 111,000 acres of land in Louisiana. C. F. Hackley of the same state bought 90,000 acres in the Calcasieu Basin. Henry Latcher and G. B. Moore bought one

¹³R. G. Lillard, The Great Forest (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1947), p. 171.



and one-half million acres in Louisiana and Texas.¹⁴ A British concern, the North American Land and Timber Company, bought 960,000 acres in southwest Louisiana, helped introduce the first railroad to the area, and brought in settlers from the Midwest.¹⁵

In spite of the increasing demands of the settlers-- 26,500 rails were needed to fence one section of land¹⁶-- the frequent and often deliberately set forest fires, and the ravages of the early lumbermen, the forests of western Louisiana stood almost untouched in 1880. In 1897 the longleaf pines there covered more than two and one-half million acres, although mills around Lake Charles had cut as much as 150 million board feet of lumber in a single year as early as 1892.¹⁷

In his report of 1884 Sargent observed:

"The country between the Mississippi River and the Rocky Mountains, now largely supplied with lumber from Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota, must for building materials soon depend upon the more remote pine forests of the Gulf region or those of the Pacific coast. A great development in the now unimportant lumber-manufacturing interests in these regions may therefore be expected.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 186.

¹⁵Calcasieu Parish Resources and Facilities (Baton Rouge: State of Louisiana Department of Public Works, 1945), p. 16.

¹⁶Lillard, op. cit., p. 79.

¹⁷Charles Mohr, "Timber Pines of the Southern United States," Division of Forestry Bulletin 13 (Washington: United States Department of Agriculture, 1897), p. 44.

.
 The most valuable forests of the state are still almost intact. . . Pine has also been cut along the Sabine River, from both forks of the Calcasieu, along the Red river in the neighborhood of Alexandria and Shreveport. . .¹⁸

The census of 1880 ranked Michigan first in lumber production, with 1,649 forest-product establishments, Missouri tenth with 881, Arkansas twenty-ninth with 319. In that year Louisiana had 175 such establishments, employing an average of less than six persons each.¹⁹

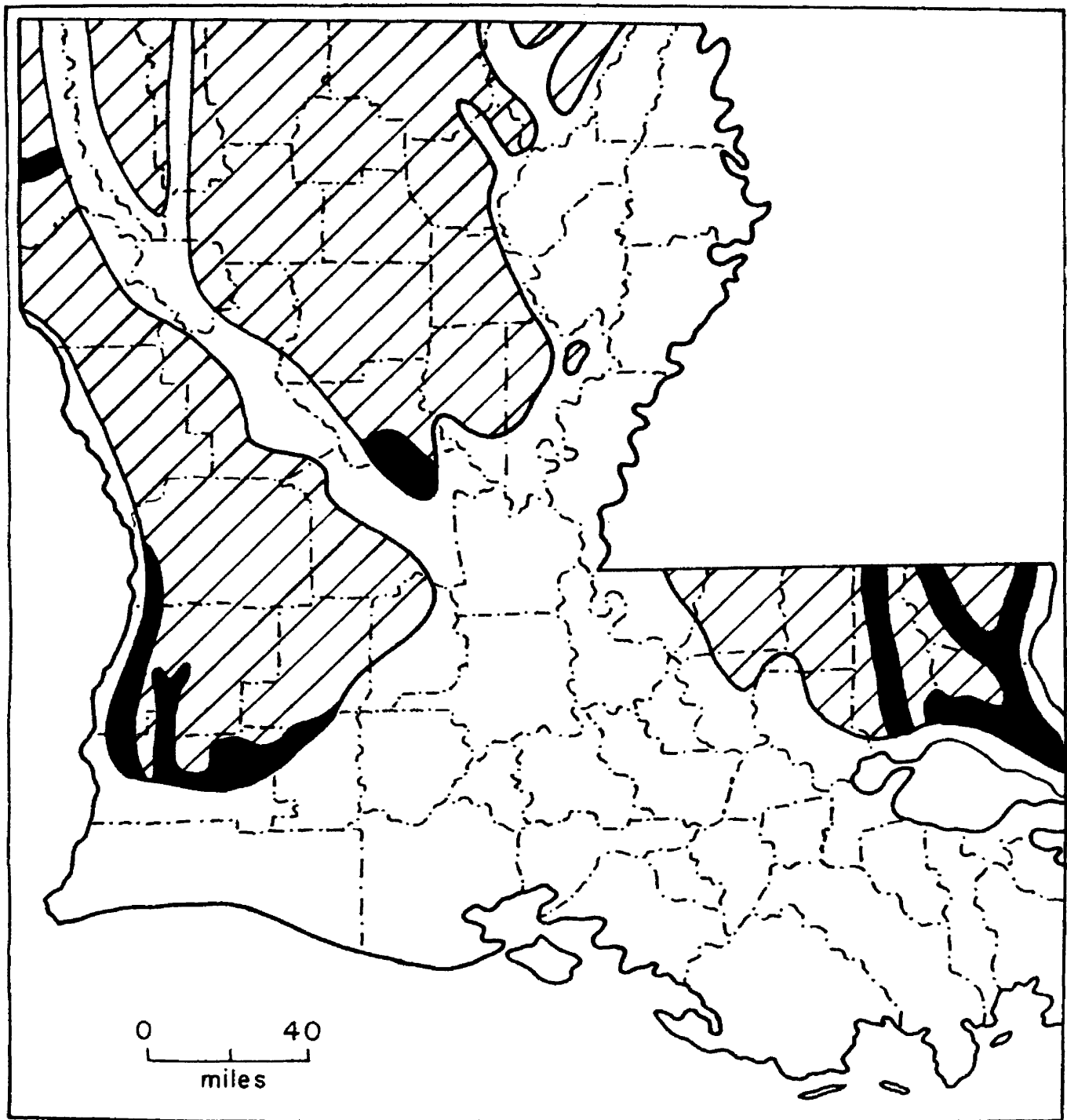
Of special interest in Sargent's report is his map,²⁰ reproduced on page 34 of this study, which outlines the then extant pine lands of Louisiana and the areas in which cutting had been extensive. When thus portrayed cartographically, the relationship between the early phase of lumbering and the waterways of Louisiana is quite apparent.

Middle Phase: For decades the growing population of the United States had made increasingly heavy demands on the northern forest areas, from the New England coast westward to the Lakes States. When the exhaustion of northern pineries became imminent, the industry moved

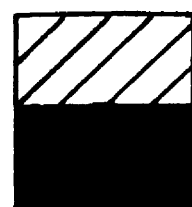
¹⁸C. S. Sargent, Report on the Forests of North America, Except of Mexico, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1884), p. 538.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 486.

²⁰Ibid., p. 537.



**LOUISIANA PINE FORESTS-1881
AFTER C.S. SARGENT**



EXISTING FORESTS

CUTOVER AREAS

Plate 37

southward. This shift of emphasis ushered in the middle phase of lumbering in Louisiana.²¹

The newcomers to the southern forests found vast stores of timber awaiting them. In Louisiana the original forest reportedly totalled some twenty-two million acres.²²

The lumber industry accomplished its southward shift in a remarkably short time. In 1892, when Michigan held top rank in lumber production, Louisiana forests were already feeling the axe, and the all-time high of southern lumber production was reached only fifteen years later.²³

Railroad expansion was essential to forest exploitation. The logging railroads opened up hitherto remote areas, and became ". . . a particularly potent force in the development of the pine forests of the south."²⁴

Some of the big mills could demolish the virgin timber of an entire section of land in less than two weeks, and Louisiana railroad mileage grew accordingly. These new roads were essential not only in supplying logs to the mills, but in carrying away their enormous output. By 1904 more than two thousand miles of logging railroads

²¹Horn, op. cit., p. 104.

²²Kabel Brasher, Louisiana, A Study of the State (Atlanta: Johnson Publishing Company, 1929), p. 37.

²³F. Moon and N. C. Brown, Elements of Forestry (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1937), p. 63.

²⁴Horn, op. cit., p. 127.

had been built into the southern pineries.²⁵ Fortier mentions that about 1905 Louisiana had three thousand miles of railroad and 322 miles of logging trams.²⁶ Most of the track was temporary, but some became part of the permanent rail system.²⁷

The expansion of the railroad net in Louisiana and its correlation in time with the period of intensive logging is revealed in the series of maps which appears in the following pages (Plates V, VI, VII, and VIII).

The lumbermen found themselves in a most fortunate situation. Apparently limitless forests of some of the world's finest timber were at hand, and the demand for forest products was tremendous. The forests themselves were a logger's dream--clear and open--promising the cheapest and most rapid of logging operations. Weather rarely impeded cutting,²⁸ and the flow of logs from forest to mill was limited only by the capacity of men and machines.

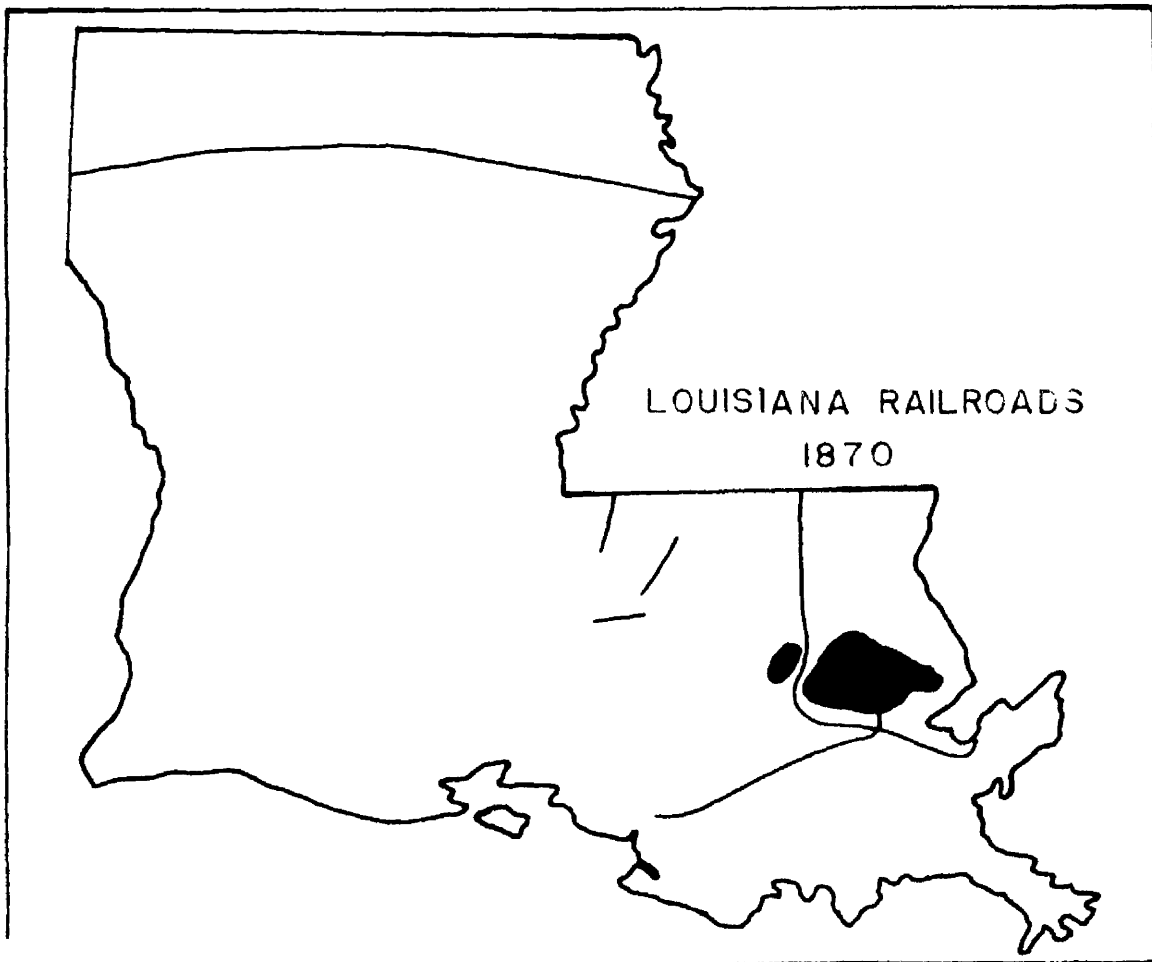
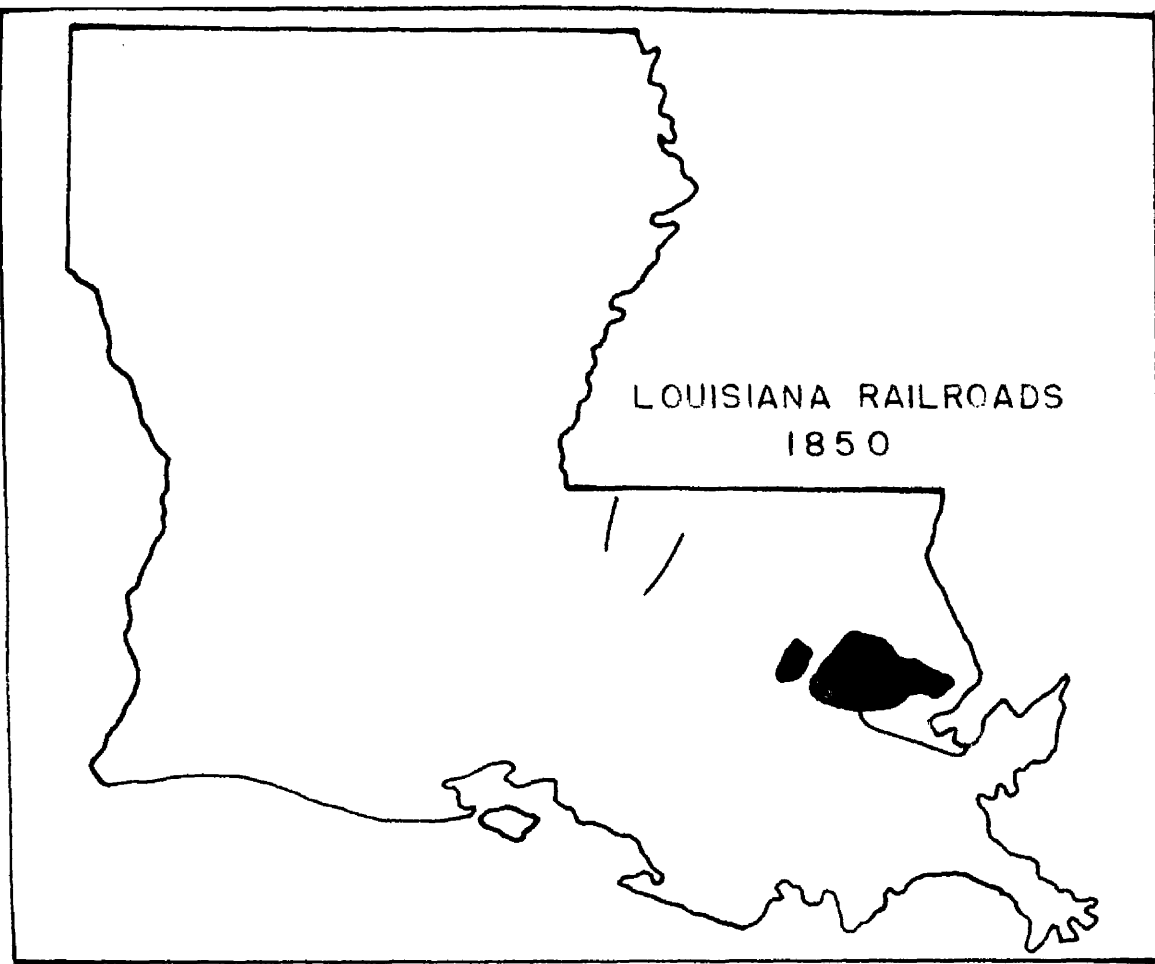
The price of standing timber, even in the peak years, remained low. Stumpage prices of longleaf went

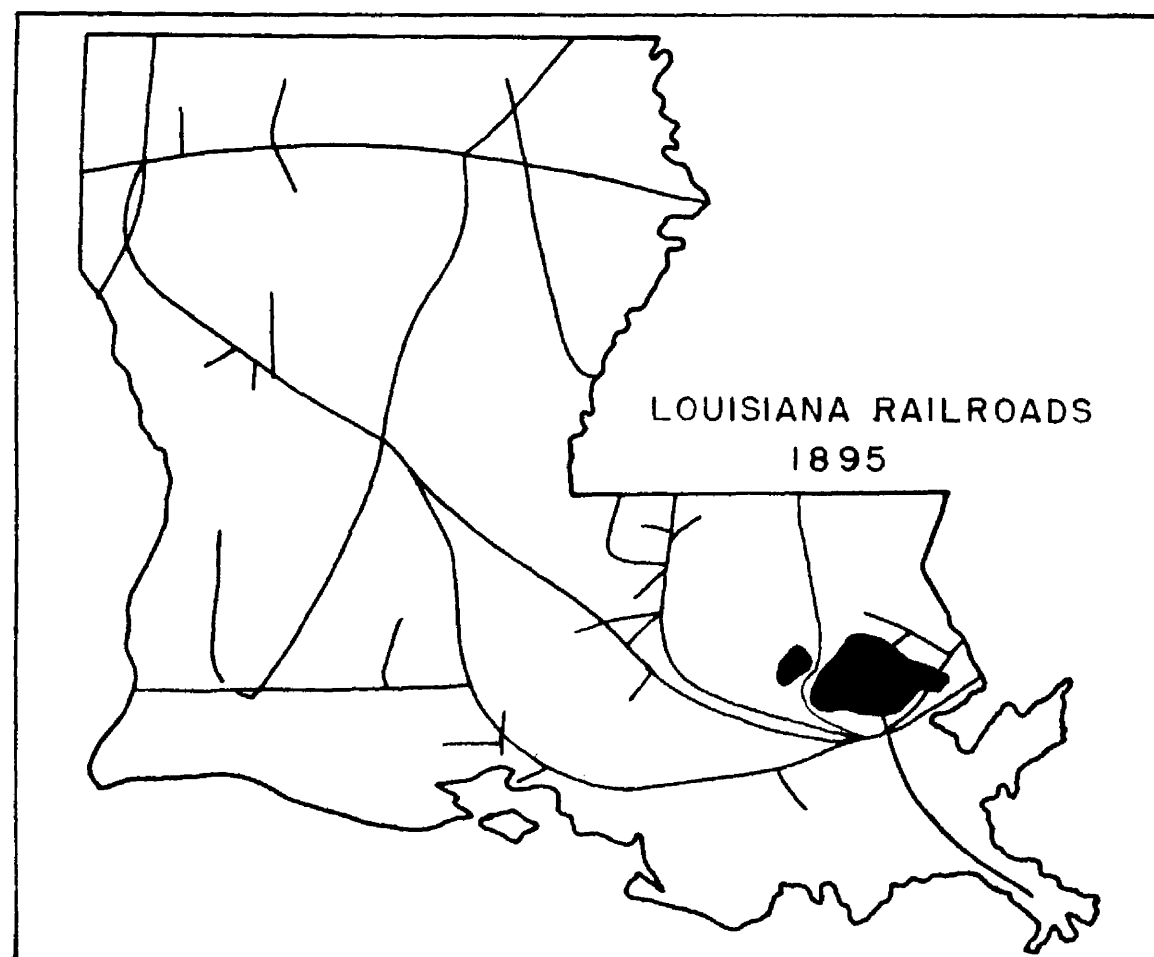
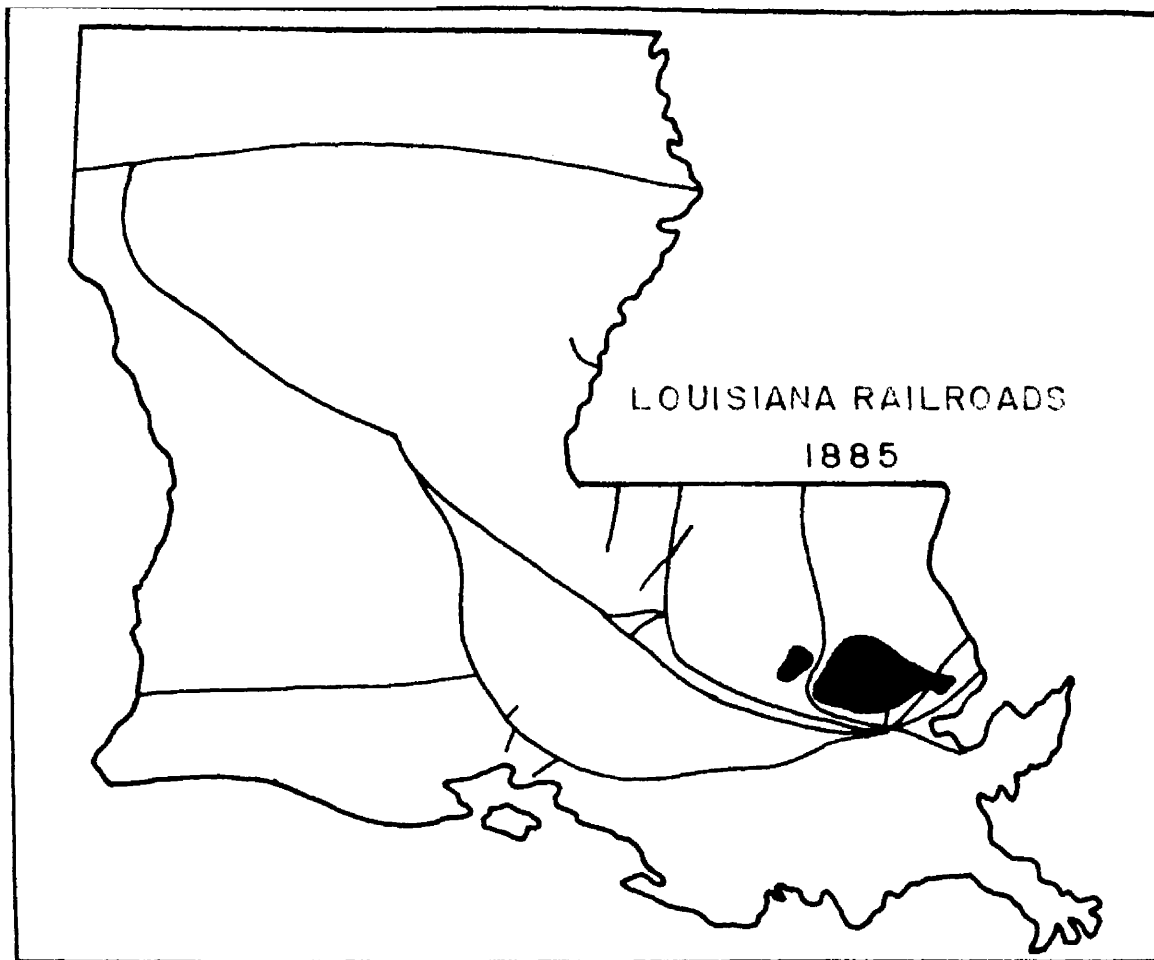
²⁵W. W. Davis, "The Yellow-pine Lumber Industry in the South," Review of Reviews, XXIX (1904), 445.

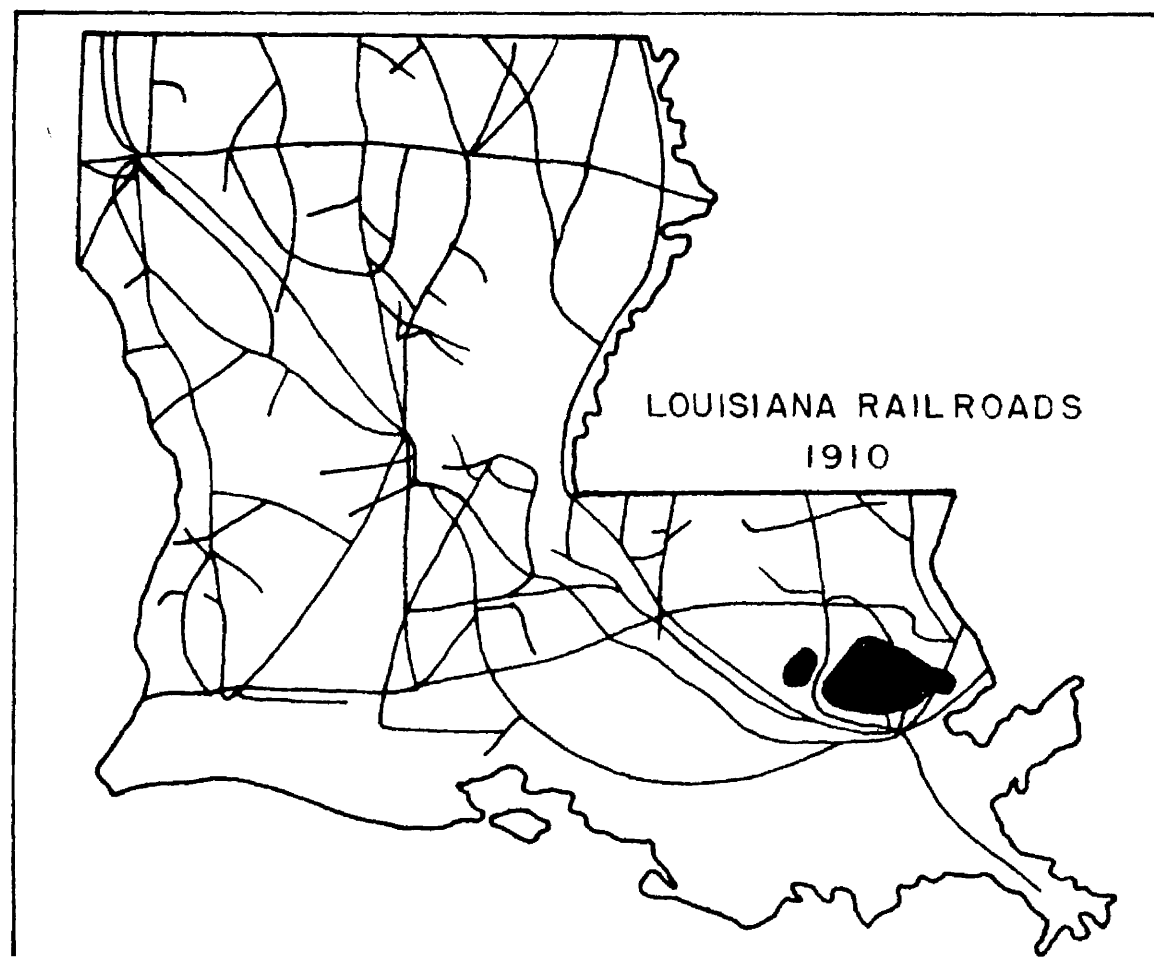
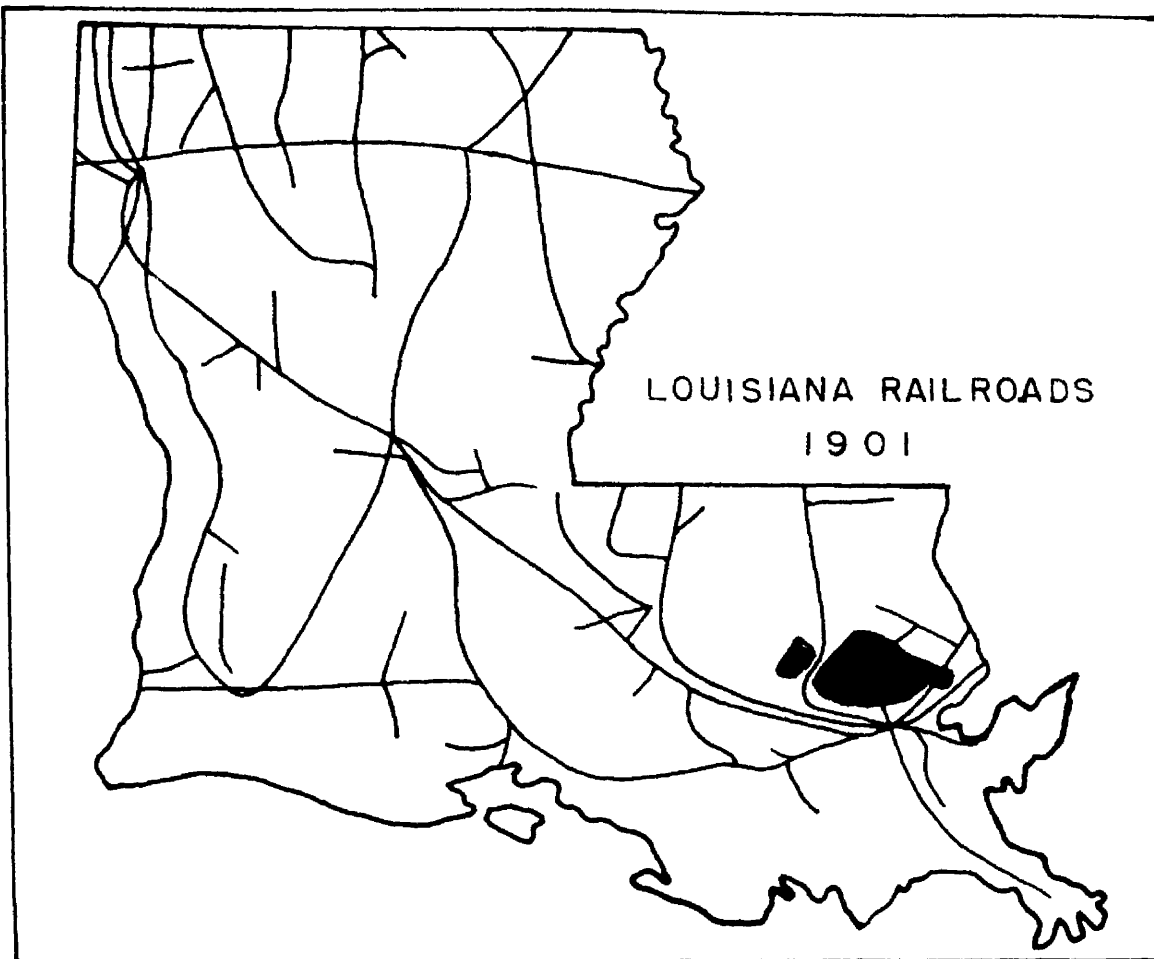
²⁶Alcee Fortier, Louisiana (Century Historical Association, 1914), II, 107.

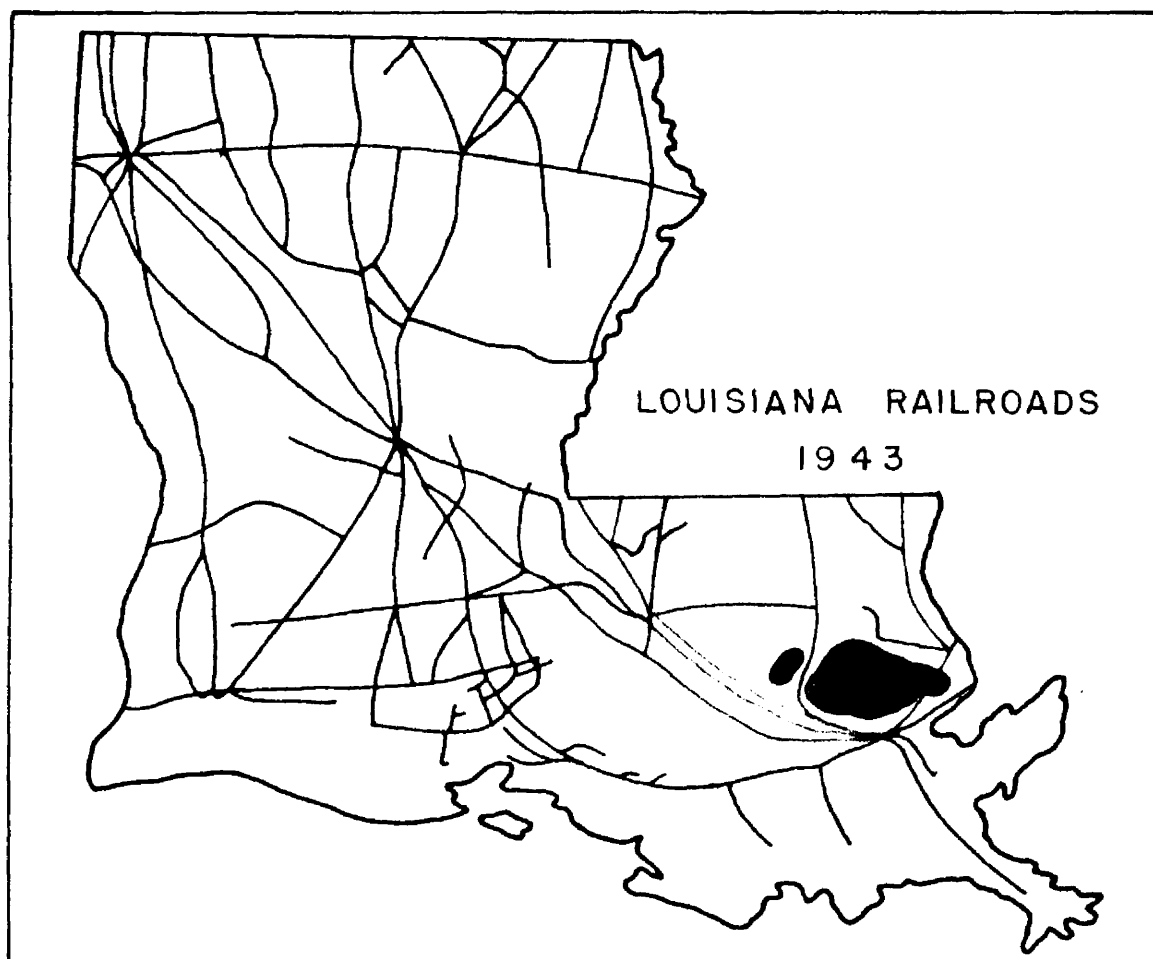
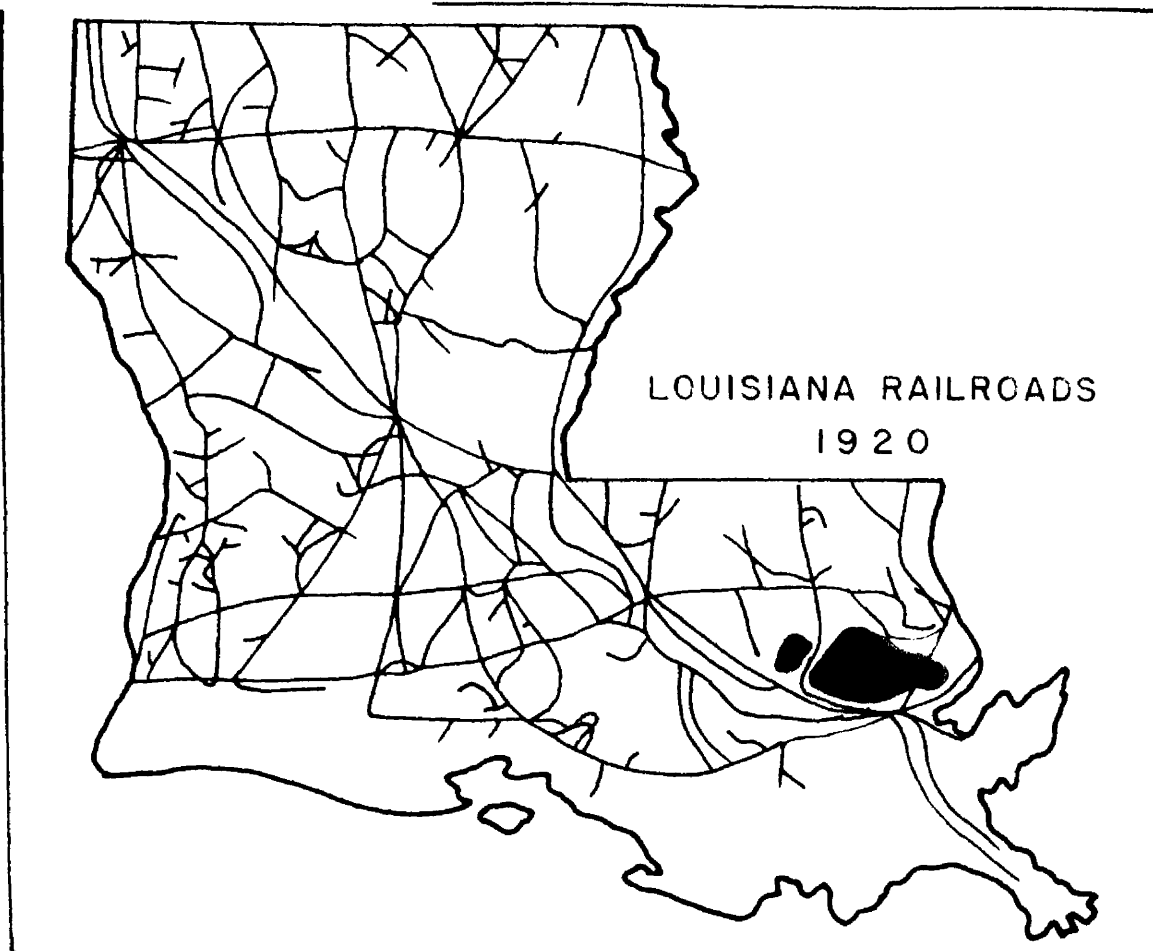
²⁷Foster, op. cit., p. 6.

²⁸Hartman, loc. cit.









from ten cents a thousand board feet in 1880 to ten dollars a thousand in 1923.²⁹ After the Missouri Pacific extended its line from Alexandria to Columbia, longleaf in Caldwell Parish sold for less than \$3.50 an acre.³⁰ For the most part landholders were willing to sell. Cutting the pine represented a chance to make money on land that had previously been unproductive.

Labor presented no real problem to the mill operators. Many of the skilled workers and supervisory personnel came south with their employers, but the majority of workers were recruited from among the local inhabitants, both white and Negro. Some Swedes were brought in from the Lake States to work in the lumber camps of Texas and western Louisiana.³¹ In a number of instances Mexican laborers were hired, but their presence in the industry was of short duration. Negroes did most of the woods work in central Louisiana, and in north Louisiana much of the common labor was done by white men.³² For poor hill farmers the choice between the precarious existence of a small farm and a cash wage of \$1.50 for an eleven-hour day was not a difficult one. A man could nearly always

²⁹Wahlenburg, op. cit., p. 17.

³⁰E. B. Cottingham, Sr., A History of Caldwell Parish, Louisiana (Kelly, Louisiana: 1938), p. 53.

³¹Davis, op. cit., p. 55.

³²Foster, op. cit., p. 1.



get a job during the peak years of Louisiana lumbering. If he was fired in the morning he could walk down the track to the next mill and be at work again before dark.

In some instances the mill workers and loggers were not the most desirable elements of the population. Cottingham³³ describes those he knew as the "riff-raff of creation," and relates that they sometimes took over passenger trains between Alexandria and Columbia. For the most part the men seem to have been superior to this opinion, and as a rule the lumber companies did all they could to promote orderly conduct. Unemployed men were encouraged to "move on," this policy being applied with special vigor in the case of Negroes.

Occasionally the sawmill towns were rather crude, but the settlements were not "shanty-towns."³⁴ The lumber companies made definite attempts to advance their good reputation and make them attractive. In many cases the facilities and conveniences enjoyed by the inhabitants were superior to anything seen in the older native communities. Schools, medical care, the privilege of buying at the company commissary, electric lights and running water, and other advantages made life rather pleasant.

³³Cottingham, op. cit., p. 537.

³⁴Emerson, op. cit., p. 93.

Good wages and attractive living conditions drew men to the sawmills until in 1909 lumbering in Louisiana was second only to the manufacture of sugar and molasses as an industry. According to the census of 1910 the former employed in this state 46,072 people, with an annual production valued at \$62,838,000.

Lake Charles became the first great center of logging and lumber production in Louisiana. Sargent states in his 1884 report:

" . . . principal point of lumber manufacturing is Saint [sic] Charles, in Calcasieu Parish, on the southern border of the western pine forest. Lumber manufactured here is shipped east and west by rail, and in small schooners to Mexican and West Indian ports."³⁵

The Perkins and Miller Lumber Company came into existence in 1873, and in 1932 was still operating as the Krause and Managan Lumber Company, Limited. Mills cut at Westlake from 1882 until 1920. In spite of their dependence upon water transport, these mills were large-scale operations, and steam skidders were in use as early as 1898.³⁶

Operations farther from waterways waited for the railroads. When the Kansas City Southern began extending its line southward from Shreveport, new lands were opened to the logger. Earlier, the Texas and Pacific traversed

³⁵Sargent, op. cit., p. 537.

³⁶Boyd, loc. cit.

the longleaf district of western Louisiana, and a mill began operating at Victoria in 1882.³⁷ However, the boom was delayed until the Kansas City Southern was completed southward in 1897. This provided a north-south axis from which lines could be extended east and west. Soon a series of lateral lines linked the K. C. S. with north-south lines through Alexandria.

Bolinger, two and one-half miles south of Plain Dealing, was formerly Martin Switch, site of the Martin Lumber Company mills, cutting ten to twelve million board feet yearly. Frost Lumber Industries, Inc., had mills at Trout and Spring Hill. Other companies had mills at Al-lentown and at Zwolle, the latter built in 1886.³⁸ The Fisher mill has run continuously since 1899,³⁹ and was the first large plant in Sabine Parish.⁴⁰

Elsewhere the story was much the same. Before 1900 a mill was in operation at Ruddock, St. John the Baptist Parish, and from Garyville more than 87,000 carloads of lumber were shipped out between 1903 and 1931.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ J. G. Belisle, History of Sabine Parish (Many, Louisiana: Sabine Banner Press, 1912), p. 260.

³⁹ P. A. Bloomer, "Fisher, Louisiana, A Mill That Once Cut Out, Now Plans to Run 'From Now On.'" The Gulf Coast Lumberman, XXXVII (1950), 22.

⁴⁰ Belisle, op. cit., p. 262.

The latter mill cut one hundred thousand board feet daily, and between 1915 and 1922 had payrolls averaging \$1,062,000. annually.⁴¹ Land around Dry Prong, Grant Parish, was being logged in 1916,⁴² and at Urania in 1910.⁴³ Thirty-eight thousand acres of timber were cut near Merryville, northwestern Beauregard Parish, between 1910 and 1921, steam skidders being brought in to remove fallen trees more rapidly following the hurricane of 1918.⁴⁴

Calcasieu Parish mills had largely "cut out"--halted work due to timber depletion--by 1925,⁴⁵ but farther north the end came some years later. Vernon Parish reached its peak of production in 1920, with eleven big mills in operation, some of which ran night and day for years. In a twenty-year span the assessed value of Vernon Parish timber dropped from forty to six million dollars. By 1938 seventy per cent of the parish had been clearcut, or

⁴¹J. M. Eyraud and D. J. Millet, A History of St. John the Baptist Parish (Marrero, Louisiana: Hope Haven Press, 1939), p. 50.

⁴²D. Bruce and C. A. Blackford, "Use of Fire in Natural Regeneration of Longleaf Pine," Journal of Forestry, XLVIII (1950), 114.

⁴³Chapman, op. cit., p. 121.

⁴⁴Kerr, loc. cit.

⁴⁵Calcasieu Parish, op. cit., p. 17.

stripped of its timber, and natural forest regeneration had been largely ruined by the steam skidders, which destroyed uncut trees.⁴⁶

Under the widely held "cut out and get out" policy the intensive phase of Louisiana lumbering could not last long. Southern pine production declined steadily after 1916, and the industry shifted its center of activity to the west coast.⁴⁷

The rapidity with which big-time lumbering had entered Louisiana was matched by the speed of its departure. The logging railroads were taken up, the mills dismantled, and the towns deserted. Along one railroad line in western Louisiana twenty-three sawmills, each cutting more than 100,000 board feet of lumber a day, went out of existence in five years.⁴⁸ Southwest Louisiana was left with the largest tract of clearcut land west of the Mississippi: one million acres.⁴⁹ The big mills needed a continuous flow of logs for profitable operations, and only smaller mills could subsist on the restricted

⁴⁶Vernon Parish, op. cit., p. 17.

⁴⁷Moon, op. cit., p. 243.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 281.

⁴⁹J. W. Cruikshank, "Forest Resources of Southwest Louisiana," Forest Survey Release No. 43 (New Orleans: Southern Forest Experiment Station, 1949), p. 1.

forest areas that remained.⁵⁰

The decline in lumbering was attended by shifts of population. Between 1920 and 1930 Allen, Beauregard, and Vernon parishes lost almost ten thousand people, while in the same decade Calcasieu gained almost nine thousand.⁵¹ In Vernon and Beauregard sixteen large mills, each with towns of at least one thousand, had cut out and were abandoned by 1933.⁵² A few of the larger mills continued to operate, as at Fisher, Zimmerman, and Longleaf. Others turned to another product, as at Elizabeth, but most of them have disappeared. The recent closing of the large Louisiana Central Lumber Company mill at Clarks, Caldwell Parish, indicates the general trend of the large mill toward decline.⁵³ This mill reportedly manufactured over a billion board feet of lumber during its fifty years of operation. Until recently the company employed some 600 men at Clarks.

The series of maps on the pages immediately following show the transitory nature of the sawmill towns of western Louisiana, and illustrate how rapidly this phase

⁵⁰J. H. Stone, C. F. Evans, and W. R. Nine, "Forestry on Large Ownerships in the South," Yearbook of Agriculture (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1949), p. 281.

⁵¹Cruikshank, op. cit., p. 2.

⁵²Ibid., p. 25.

⁵³The Shreveport [Louisiana] Times, February 21, 1953.

of forest exploitation has passed. The towns shown are those selected for this study.

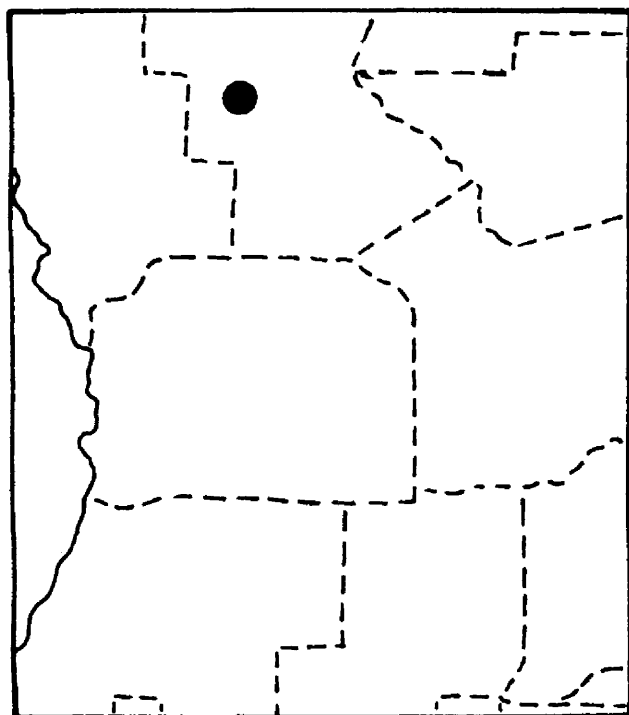
Late Phase: The virtual exhaustion of the virgin forests of the South did not herald the extinction of the lumber industry, as some had anticipated. Recent years have witnessed the emergence of the small portable sawmill as the major producer of lumber. These "peckerwood" mills operate profitably since the scattered forest remnants can be reached by road and highway, and can provide the small volume of logs required by each mill.

The small sawmill is not a newcomer to the industrial scene. Mills of low capacity have long been active in this country. Of some 50,000 sawmills operating in the United States in 1909, seventy-five per cent cut less than a million board feet yearly.

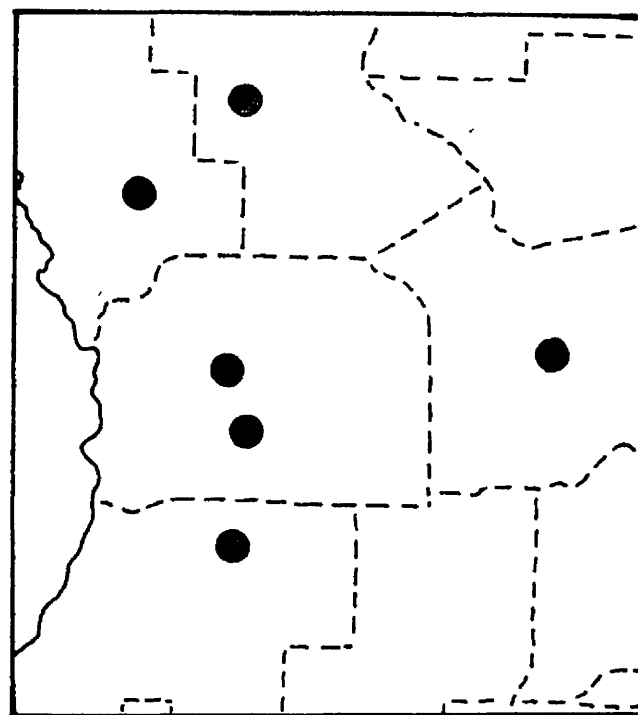
The significant change in lumbering in recent years has been in the growing volume of lumber produced by lesser plants relative to the output of the large mills.

The increasing importance of small sawmills as lumber producers was noted by Boisfontaine in 1934.⁵⁴ He observed that as early as 1929 more than half our total pine production was cut by small mills. At that time the average portable mill employed three or four men and ran about seventy-five days a year. Occasionally it became

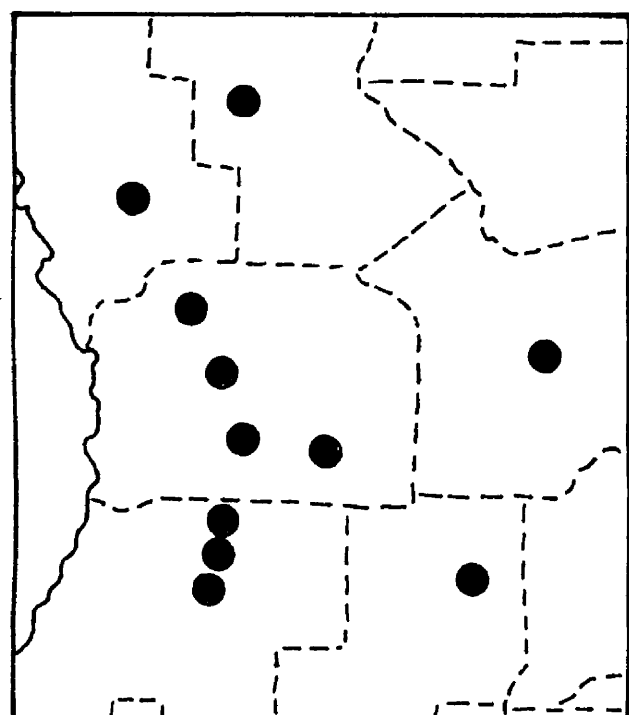
⁵⁴A. S. Boisfontaine, "The Small Mill--Its Awakening and Development," Journal of Forestry, XXX (1937), p. 137.



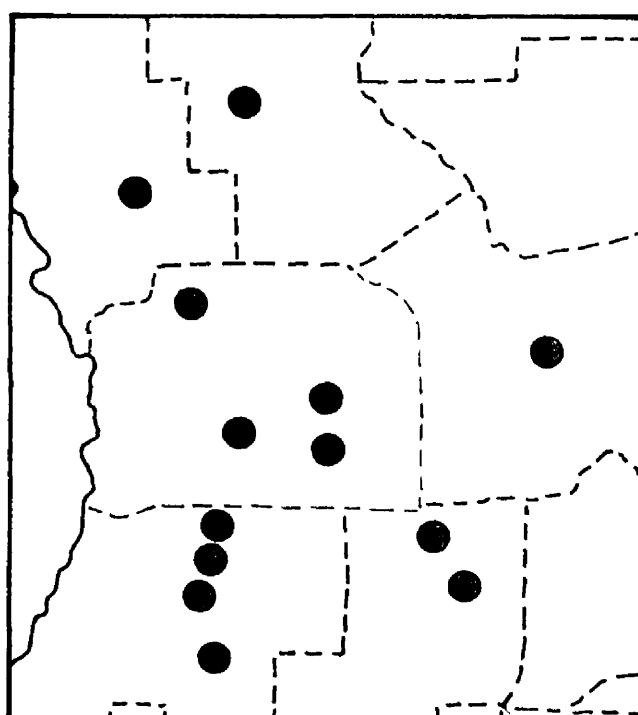
1895



1896-1900



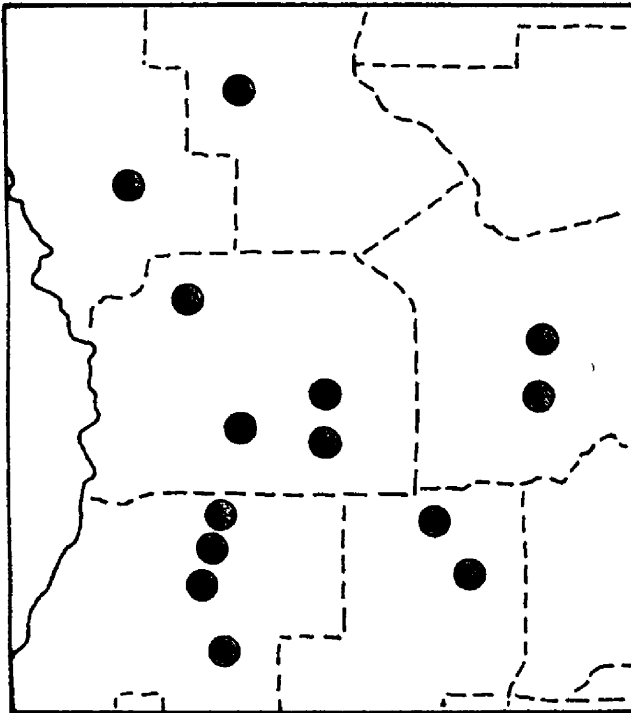
1901-1905



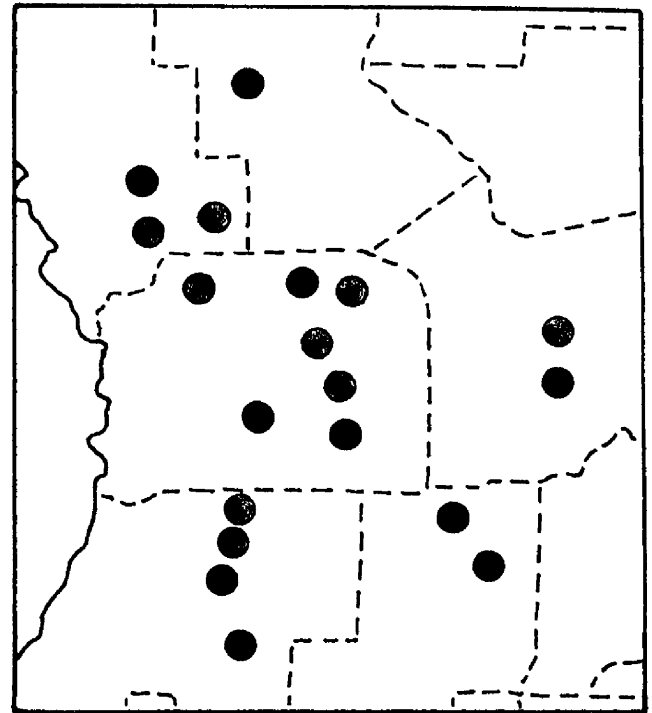
1906-1910

SOUTHWEST LOUISIANA SAWMILL TOWNS
1895 — 1910

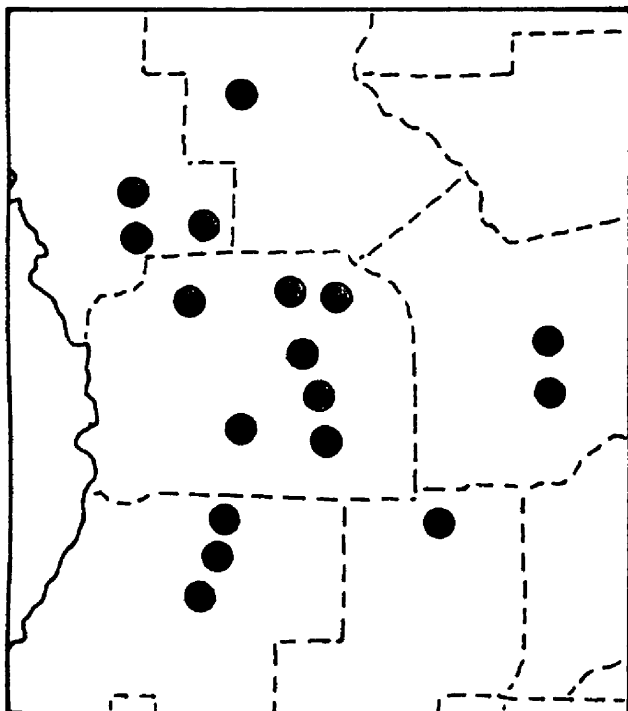
Plate IX



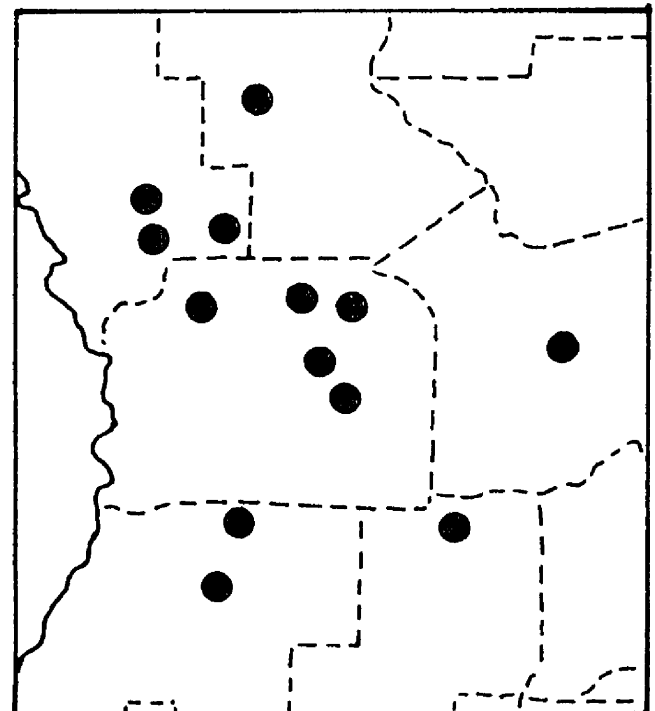
1911-1915



1916-1920



1921-1925

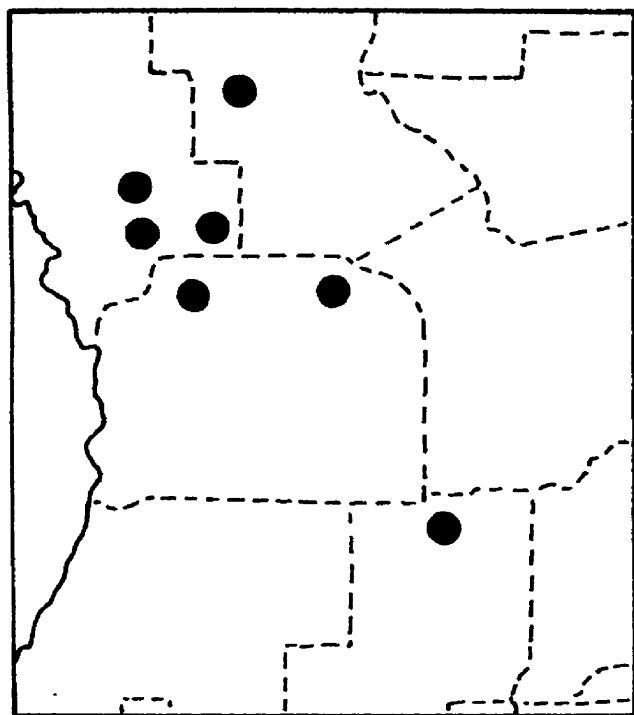


1926-1930

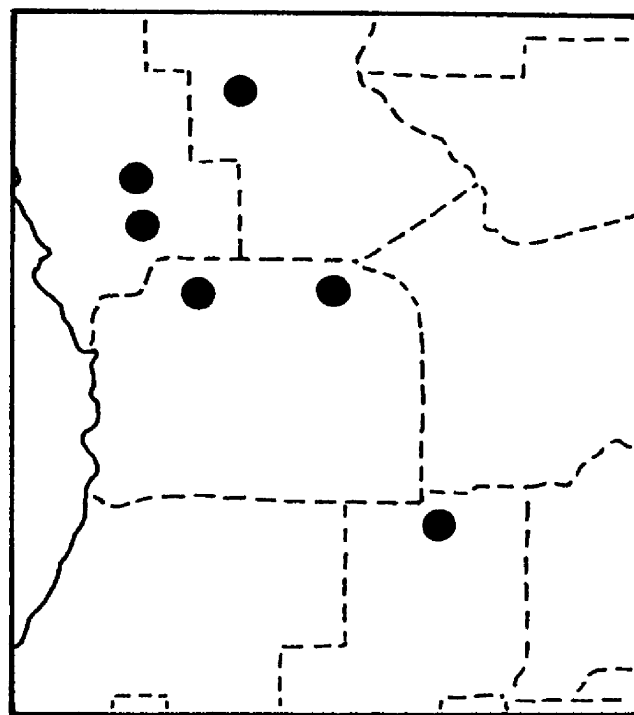
SOUTHWEST LOUISIANA SAWMILL TOWNS

1911 — 1930

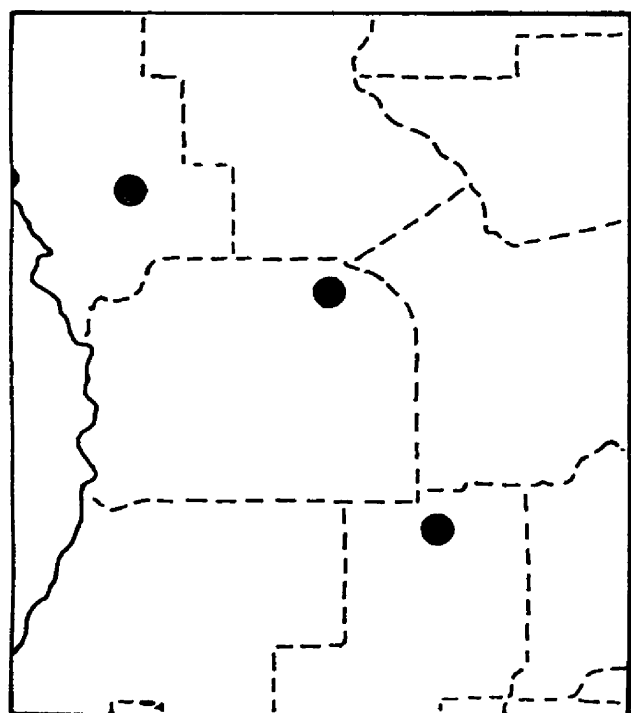
Plate X



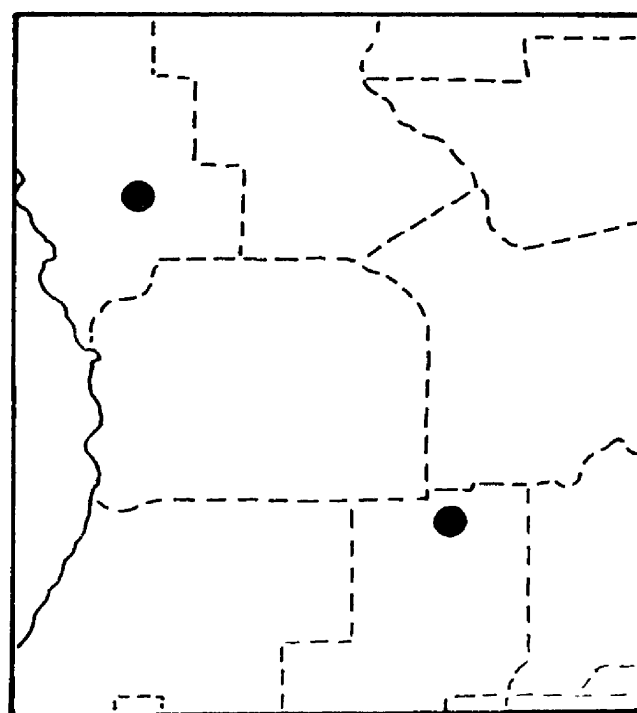
1931-1935



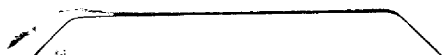
1936-1940



1941-1945



1946-1950

SOUTHWEST LOUISIANA SAWMILL TOWNS**1931 — 1950**

cheaper to move the mill to the timber, especially if the move insured a timber supply sufficient for a six-months' run.

In 1934 there were approximately 8,000 sawmills operating in Louisiana, southern Arkansas, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, east Texas, southwest Oklahoma, southern South Carolina, southeast Missouri, and western Tennessee. Of the pine mills in this group, ninety-two per cent had a capacity of less than 20,000 board feet of lumber daily.⁵⁵ Many of the larger mills of a decade or two earlier could have produced ten times that volume.

Louisiana had 557 sawmills in 1937, but only ten per cent of them had a daily capacity of more than 40,000 board feet. It should be noted that these small mills combined to produce, in that same year, no less than sixty-eight per cent of Louisiana's lumber.⁵⁶ Cruikshank reported 95 sawmills active in southwest Louisiana in 1937, 72 of them turning out less than 40,000 board feet daily.⁵⁷

⁵⁵T. F. Eldredge, "Sawmills in the Lower South," Forest Survey Release No. 25 (New Orleans: Southern Forest Experiment Station, 1937), p. 2.

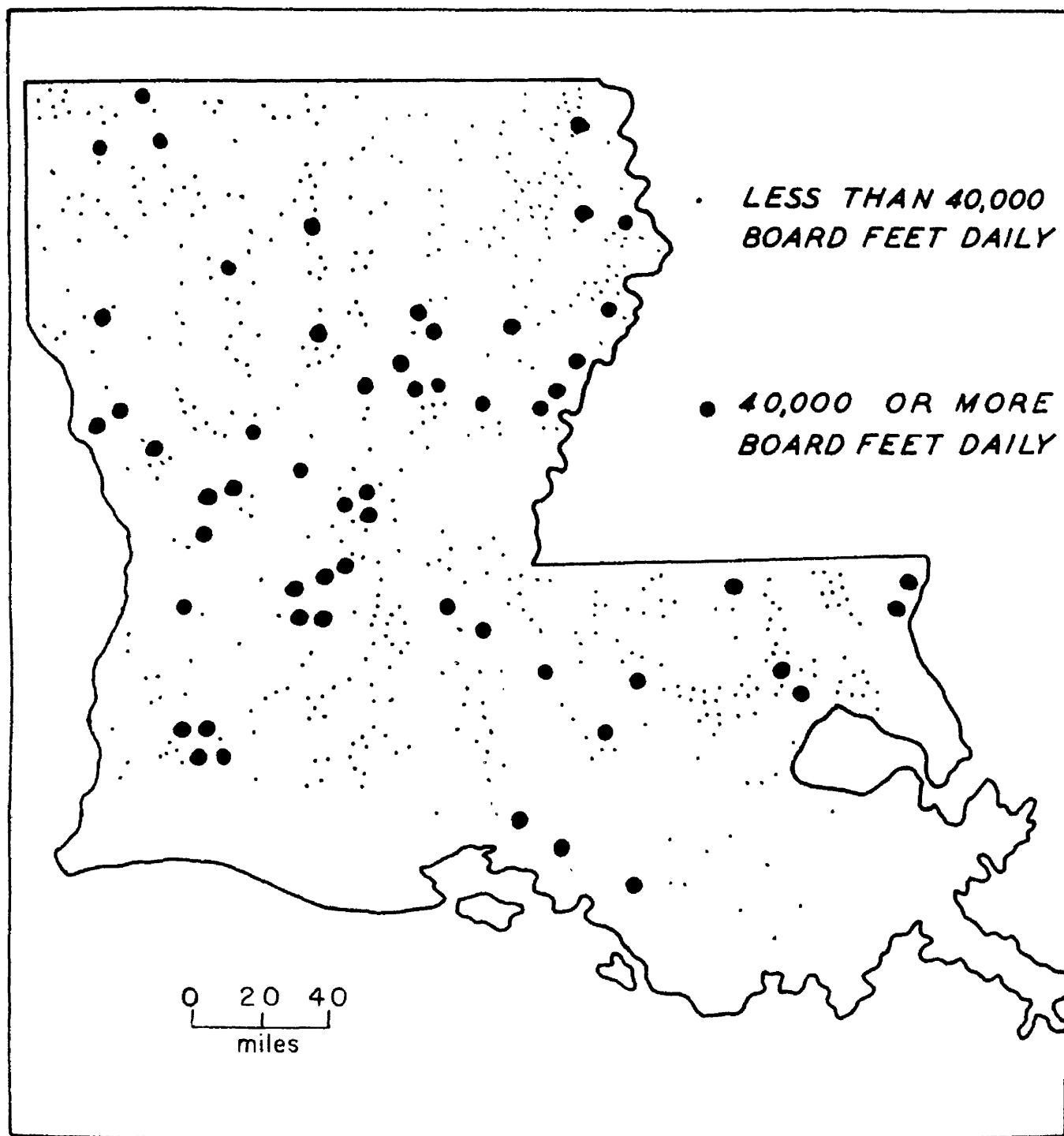
⁵⁶H. K. Winters, G. B. Ward, and T. F. Eldredge, "Louisiana Forest Resources and Industries," Miscellaneous Publication No. 519 (Washington: United States Department of Agriculture, 1943), p. 4.

⁵⁷Cruikshank, op. cit., p. 25.

The accompanying map of Louisiana pine and hardwood mill locations (Plate XII) clearly shows the numerical superiority of the small sawmill. Of 496 mills listed by the Louisiana Forestry Commission as active in the state in 1946, only sixty-nine cut more than five million board feet yearly. The Fullerton plant turned out that amount in less than a month.

Today the team of motor truck and portable sawmill has become the hallmark of lumbering in Louisiana, and in this present phase of operations the remaining large mills have also come to rely heavily upon the truck.

Of the three stages through which lumbering has progressed in Louisiana, the second is held to be of special geographic significance. In an interval of a few decades men destroyed or damaged the forests of the state, and in so doing altered their natural environment to a marked degree. In the process of exploitation the lumbermen planted elements and patterns of a cultural nature. Some have persisted, even though the combination of human and natural circumstances which brought them into being or otherwise led to their importation no longer prevails.



LOUISIANA SAWMILLS - 1937
AFTER WINTERS, WARD, AND ELDREDGE

CHAPTER IV

SOUTHWEST LOUISIANA LUMBERING ESTABLISHMENTS

The Sawmill Towns: The sawmill towns of southwest Louisiana left ample evidence of their former existence in the surviving complex of culturo-geographic traits.

The towns were built to produce lumber, and in the selection of mill locations only considerations pertinent to lumber production in volume prevailed. Sites were generally well within the longleaf district. Settlements in marginal areas were sometimes forced to turn to other forests, utilizing other pines or hardwoods.

All the towns studied were situated on rail lines. Large mills called for logs in great numbers, and for a flow of timber not subject to seasonal fluctuation. Towns were most numerous along the main railroad lines, but numbers were built in the heart of the longleaf district, linked to the main lines by spurs.

Other factors influenced site selection to a comparatively minor degree. Water supply for mill and town is a case in point. Supplies were usually adequate, since streams capable of filling ponds were numerous, and a dependable water source was not too difficult to locate in most instances. Where surface waters proved inadequate, deep wells were drilled.

Almost every function performed in association with the town directly or indirectly had some part to play

in supplying the mill with logs and converting those logs into lumber. Here were concentrated all the facilities, human and mechanical, for forest exploitation: large and efficient mills of high capacity, highly skilled administrators and technicians, and a large semi-skilled and unskilled labor force.

The professional people of the town were charged with the task of keeping the labor force healthy, secure, and reasonably content. Doctors, ministers, barbers, clerks were all at hand to serve the men who served the mills. The lumber company responsible for the presence of all these people automatically assumed the direction of many of their affairs. Babies were born in company hospitals, housewives bought their groceries at a company store, and families lived in houses built and owned by the company. Order was maintained by parish deputies paid by the company. Few towns ever existed in Louisiana with a greater singleness of function than those devoted to lumbering.

Unity of function contributed to the development of a settlement possessing a high degree of self-containment and cohesiveness, but also was directly responsible for its virtual extinction. When the town destroyed the timber nothing remained to justify the settlement's continued existence. Older settlements could discharge functions beyond the range of the lumber industry, and even absorbed that of the sawmill towns to a great degree,

acquiring sawmills as appendages to their older bodies.

No single sawmill town could be said to exactly resemble another, yet they did possess a number of traits in common which set them apart. A visitor to one sawmill town would later be able to identify another, even though there might be strong dissimilarities. Detailed descriptions of the towns investigated during the preparation of this report appear in Appendix A.

The sawmill towns were organized along purely functional lines. They were divided into sharply defined sections, each having a specific task to perform relative to the functioning of the entire settlement. Individual sections were separated, set apart by some group of structures or other feature.

The mills themselves dominated the cultural landscape, including as they did the tallest and largest buildings in the pineries of southwest Louisiana. Not only were they visually impressive, but audibly as well. The sounds of the mill reached every part of the town, and lives were regulated by the mill whistles.

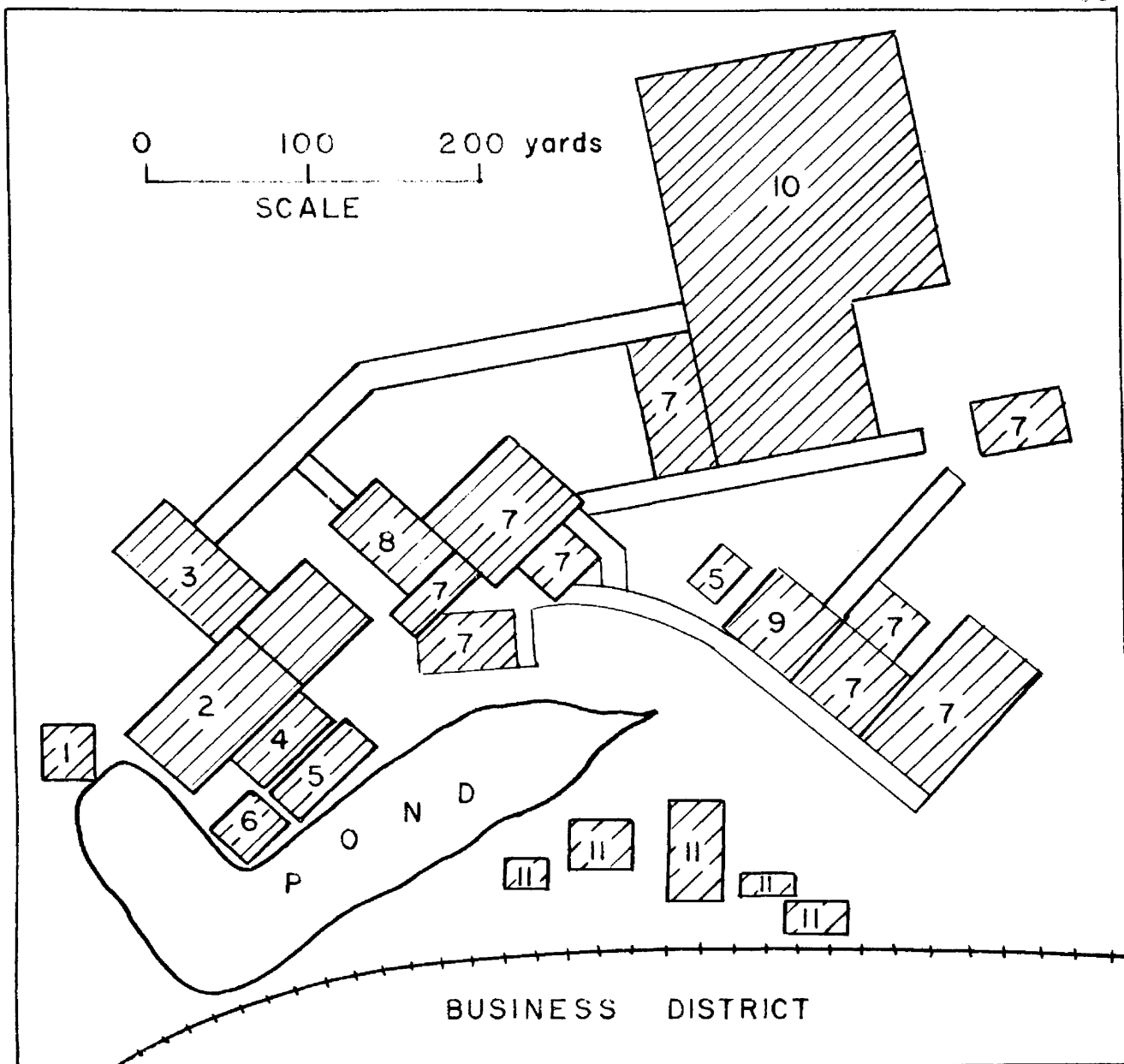
The principal component of the mill plant was the pine mill, along with the planer mill. In their immediate vicinity were the dry kilns, lumber yard, and machine shop. The latter was, in its older form, a blacksmith shop, but as the mills grew and transport systems developed the small shops became large establishments capable of making major

repairs to mill equipment and railroad rolling stock. Standpipes and generators at the mill furnished water and electricity to the entire settlement.

Mill ponds were almost universally built at the mills. They served as storage areas where reserves of logs could be accumulated against periods of bad weather or any event which might slow the progress of loggers at the front. Mill ponds also cleaned the logs of dirt and gravel which might injure the saws, and logs stored there were easily handled and brought into the mill. Where water supplies were deficient, reserve ponds were dug, and water stored there was transferred to the main ponds as required. Most ponds were made by damming creeks, but others were entirely artificial.

Lumber at the mill was usually moved on "dollies," heavy two-wheeled carts drawn by mules. "Dolly-run" mules were housed in barns near the mill, the area around the barn being enclosed by a high board fence and called a "corral." Mules used at the front were kept in corrals and barns built for them there. In some instances dolly-run mules were replaced by battery-powered electric tractors, or by shortened Ford trucks. The accompanying map (Plate XIII) illustrates a typical sawmill plant.

In each sawmill town there was a section devoted to providing the more essential goods and services. Some conveniences and necessities were occasionally furnished by nearby settlements, but for the most part the mill town took care of its own.



1. CRANE
2. MILL
3. GREEN CHAIN
4. ENGINE ROOM
5. BOILER ROOM
6. FUEL ROOM
7. LUMBER SHED
8. KILNS
9. PLANER MILL
10. STACKS
- II. SHOPS

SAWMILL PLANT FISHER, LA.

1940 MILL

The commissary was the commercial heart of the community. This was a department store owned and run by the company, and there the mill employees and their families bought the bulk of the everyday items they consumed. Such stores were ordinarily superior to anything seen in other small communities, since they were so large and well-stocked. Without leaving the building one might buy a pound of bacon, a box of shotgun shells, a gallon of kerosene, a rocking chair, and a pair of overalls. In many cases the commissary building housed other facilities as well. It was not uncommon for the barber, the doctor, the deputy, and others to occupy office space under the same roof.

Almost everything sold in the commissaries was brought in by rail, including foodstuffs. Local farms made practically no contribution to the economy of the town.

Also bridging the gap between mill and town were the company offices. These were ordinarily situated in a frame structure near the commissary. As a rule the office building was large, perhaps two stories high. In it were housed most administrative operations relative to company business activities. The building frequently served as a bank, often having a large brick and steel vault. A few of the larger towns had branch banks from older communities.

Boarding houses were also prominent in the town's

commercial districts. Large frame structures, these houses were almost invariably two stories high, or even three. Sometimes the more pretentious were dignified with the appellation "hotel," but their conformation to general type rarely varied. Boarding houses were not only sleeping quarters but dining places as well. Cafes or restaurants were quite common.

Some towns had halls where motion pictures were shown several times a week. Often the theater was housed in a separate wooden building, but in other instances the pictures were shown in other structures.

Almost all settlements had a small post office and barber shop. The company doctor had a downtown office, which served the town as drug dispensary. A depot and ice house complete the general picture of the commercial district, the latter a small structure from which ice, brought in by train, was sold.

Though the foregoing may present an apparently drab conception of a sawmill town business district, it is more attractive when compared to that of the typical small settlement of those days. Certainly the mill town residents felt that the facilities available to them were superior to those of many older communities.

White residential districts were almost invariably located near the commercial sections and relatively isolated from the mills and Negro quarters. In general they included dwellings, churches, and schools. They were laid

out on a regular, grid-like plan, with widely spaced houses. Yards were large, and outbuildings numerous.

Lumber companies usually endeavored to make these areas attractive. Trees were planted, streets were graded, and electric lights were installed. Water was usually piped from the mill, though this might not include bathroom facilities. Baths were usually installed at the resident's expense. Sometimes water came from wells dug at each house, or perhaps shared by several families.

White residences were remarkably uniform in construction and appearance. Most common was the pyramidal house, and to a lesser degree the bungalow. Houses with pyramidal roofs, that is, sloping upward at the same angle from all four sides toward a central point, are universal in their distribution in Louisiana, and are found with many variations. The sawmill variety is distinguished by its rather small size, square floor plan, and single story. Compared to many houses with approximately pyramidal roofs, the company house was stark in its simplicity. Bungalows were single-story houses, with gables facing front and rear, and usually two rooms wide and two or three rooms deep.

Possibly of more significance than house type as a distinguishing trait of the sawmill town was the remarkable degree of uniformity in house construction. This practice in company housing is frequently seen in towns which existed prior to the advent of lumbering's second

phase. On the following page photographs of company houses at De Ridder and Oakdale illustrate this uniformity (Figures 2 and 3).

Pyramidal and bungalow types of construction were adapted to many buildings other than dwellings. The former was especially popular in boarding houses, schools, and other large structures. More complete descriptions of company houses appear in Appendix A.

Aside from dwellings and their outbuildings, few elements of the human landscape were to be seen in white residential areas. Only the schools for white children and the churches were prominent. The former was a wooden building, one or two stories high, with classes rarely beyond the seventh grade. Older children often commuted to high schools in nearby communities.

As a rule only one church was built for the white residents of a sawmill town. Joint services were held at these "Union" or "Federated" churches. Occasionally the various denominations held services at different hours of the day.

Few cemeteries were opened by whites in these towns, since most seem to have been aware that the settlements were not permanent. Interments were generally made at cemeteries in older nearby communities, and occasionally at the home town of the deceased, even though this might be in another state. Cemeteries were usually in the vicinity of the church.



Figure 2: Company houses, De Ridder. Bungalows with imitation brick siding.



Figure 3: Company houses, Oakdale. Bungalows, unpainted board-and-batten.

Negro residential areas were usually close to the mills, somewhat removed from the commercial districts and quarters occupied by whites. Yards were small, houses closely spaced, and streets not as carefully laid out and maintained as in other parts of the town.

House types in the typical Negro quarter varied extensively. Often pyramidal, bungalow, log-pen, and shotgun houses were all represented. The term "log-pen" is used in reference to houses derived from the early log cabins of the pine-forest areas of Louisiana. The "shotgun" house is narrow, one room wide and two or more deep.¹ The last named was most common, and was seen or described in connection with most settlements studied. Although usually unpainted, the Negro homes were rather well constructed. Some were found which had been continuously occupied for more than forty years.

About half the Negro quarters studied had cemeteries, and at least one church. Schools were provided with a frequency only slightly less than for whites, classes being taught through the seventh grade. Here also were found the boarding houses or "sleeping quarters" occupied by the unmarried men of the quarter.

¹P. B. Kniffen, "Louisiana House Types," Annals of the Association of American Geographers, XXVI (1936), pp. 179-193. The four house types mentioned above are described in this quantitative and qualitative study of some elements of the Louisiana landscape.

Mexican laborers were isolated from both white and Negro in a quarter of their own, even poorer in human comforts than those of the latter. Never numerous, they did not constitute a major population element in any town, and never remained long in any one place. Brought in to help with advance work of mill and town construction, or as track maintenance workers, they were replaced as the permanent labor force was recruited.

Administrative functions in the sawmill town were discharged by the lumber company. Even the town officials elected by popular vote were paid by the company.

One of the most active company representatives was the "quarter-boss." This man--some of the larger towns had several--was usually a peace officer deputized by parish authorities at the request of the company, which paid his salary. He was charged with other duties according to need and ability.

Another representative of the mill owners, the company doctor, did much to keep the settlement functioning smoothly. He was paid a regular salary by the company, augmented by the fees collected from his patients. Such fees were usually small.

In every settlement studied life was quiet and orderly. No saloons were mentioned, and men seeking excitement in large quantities were forced to look elsewhere. Saloons, or "barrel-houses," were occasionally operated by individuals at places somewhat removed from company

properties, usually in older communities. Alexandria, Lake Charles, and other cities provided entertainment not found in the company towns.

The Lumber Camps: Visible culture traits peculiar to the lumber industry were not limited to the sawmill towns. Extensions of these settlements were built into nearby forest areas, and small replicas of them were often set up at points miles away from the parent centers.

These small establishments, or "camps," were built close to the front. Some included facilities adequate for family life--a store, houses, a doctor, a corral and barn, and railroad sidings where equipment could be stored. Some companies did not maintain camps at all, but sent men and animals to the front daily by train.

The shotgun houses at the camps were usually about twelve feet wide and twenty-eight feet long, and were used primarily because of their portability. It was said that two or three men could ready a shotgun for moving in about five minutes. The fire in the stove was put out and the windows were closed. The props were knocked out from under the porch roof, which swung down to cover the end of the building. Porch floors were slipped under the house, and the whole thing was picked up by a steam loader and placed on a flat car. Anchored there by cables, the houses were sometimes simply left on the cars during the

entire life of the camp.

Corrals and barns sheltered animals used at the front. Oxen were most commonly used for a long time, continuing in service until recent years. Eventually they were in great measure replaced by mules. Both were used primarily to move logs from the cutting areas to the trams. Mules were also frequently employed in grading tram roads. Horses were used only as mounts or to haul the skidder tongs from the skidder platform back to the cutting area.

The Steam Skidders and Logging Trams: The steam skidder was very extensively used, and left an indelible mark on the pineries of southwest Louisiana. The movement of logs by skidder inevitably destroyed any uncut timber and young trees which might have regenerated the forests naturally.

Connecting the sawmill with activities at the front was the logging "tram," a precariously built and impermanent standard-gauge railway. Only one narrow-gauge line was found in the entire region.

Many traces of these trams are yet visible. The maps of Vernon and Allen Parish trams (Plates XIV and XV) were taken from air photos. The Fisher-Victoria tram map (Plate XVI) was copied from a map kept by a former logging superintendent who worked for many years in that

area.

As the trams came into disuse the rails were taken up and the rights-of-way fell into disrepair. In a few places the line of a tram still sees service as a rural road.

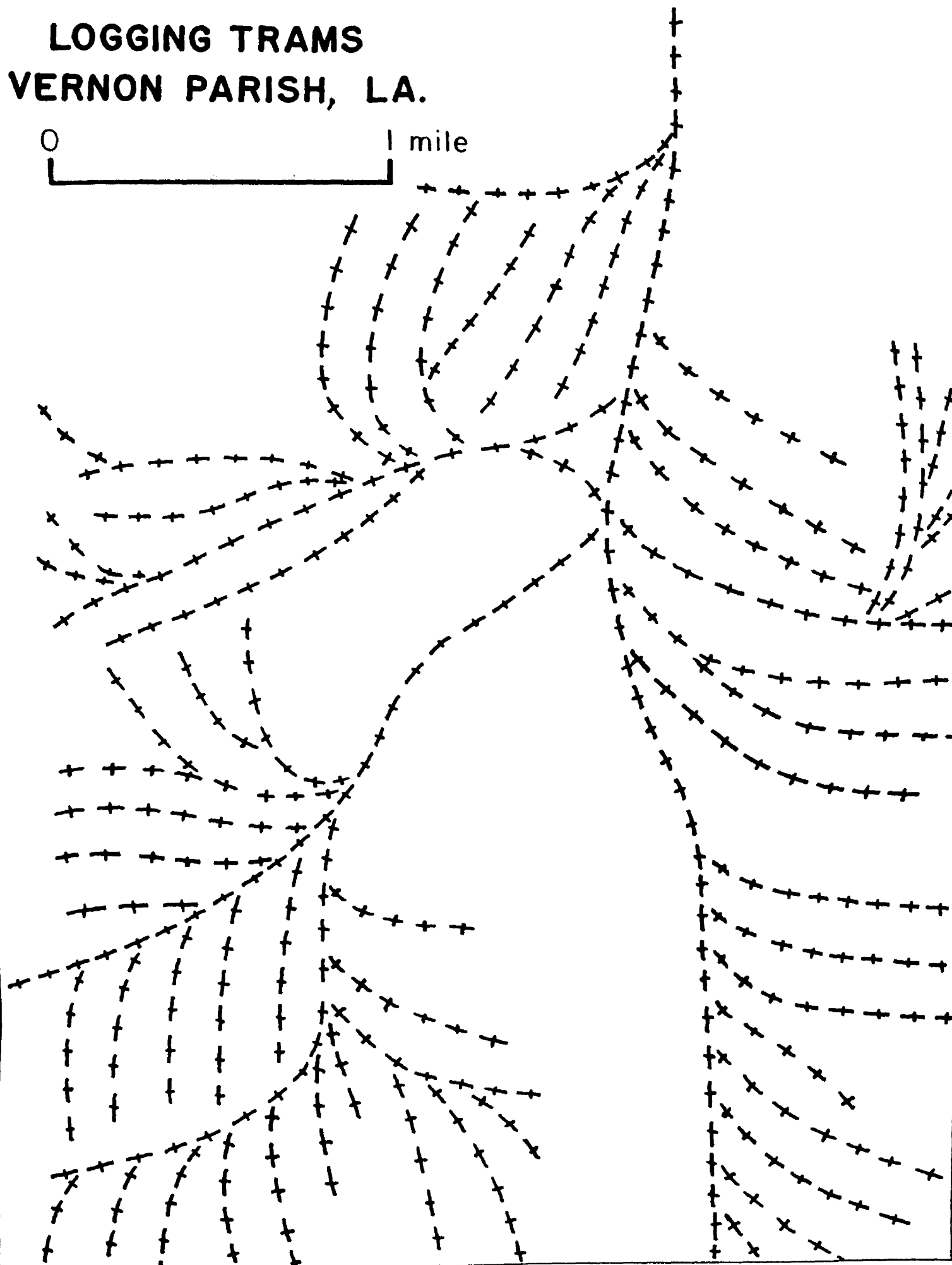
The right-of-way was staked out by the logging superintendent, the man primarily responsible for getting logs to his mill. He had to avoid steep grades and keep bridge construction to a minimum. He had to use as few rails as possible, and yet stay within the limits of company land. He had to lay track so that in the event logging was halted in one place by bad weather, a better-drained area could be reached and time loss would be minimized. His ability to deliver logs to the mill at low cost to a great degree determined the margin of profit the company made on its lumber.

Where terrain permitted, as on the terrace surfaces in the south, regular and systematic tram routes were followed, exhibiting patterns of great uniformity (Plate XV). On more uneven surfaces, such as the Sabine and Vernon hills, trams were forced to conform more closely to local topography. An irregular but more practical pattern resulted (Plate XIV).

Track was not laid on all these lines simultaneously. As fast as the timber of an area was removed, the rails were lifted and extended into territory as yet unlogged.

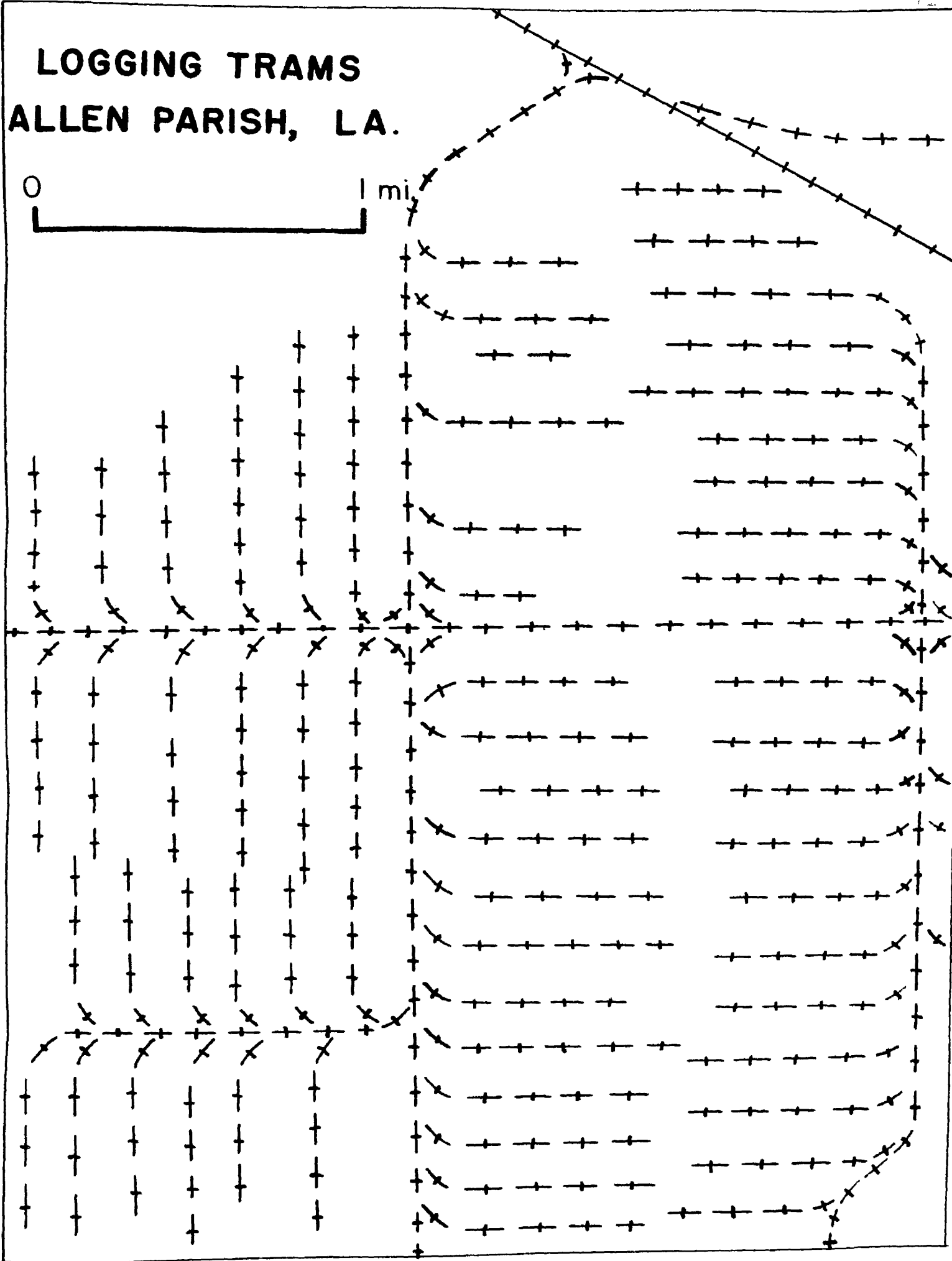
LOGGING TRAMS
VERNON PARISH, LA.

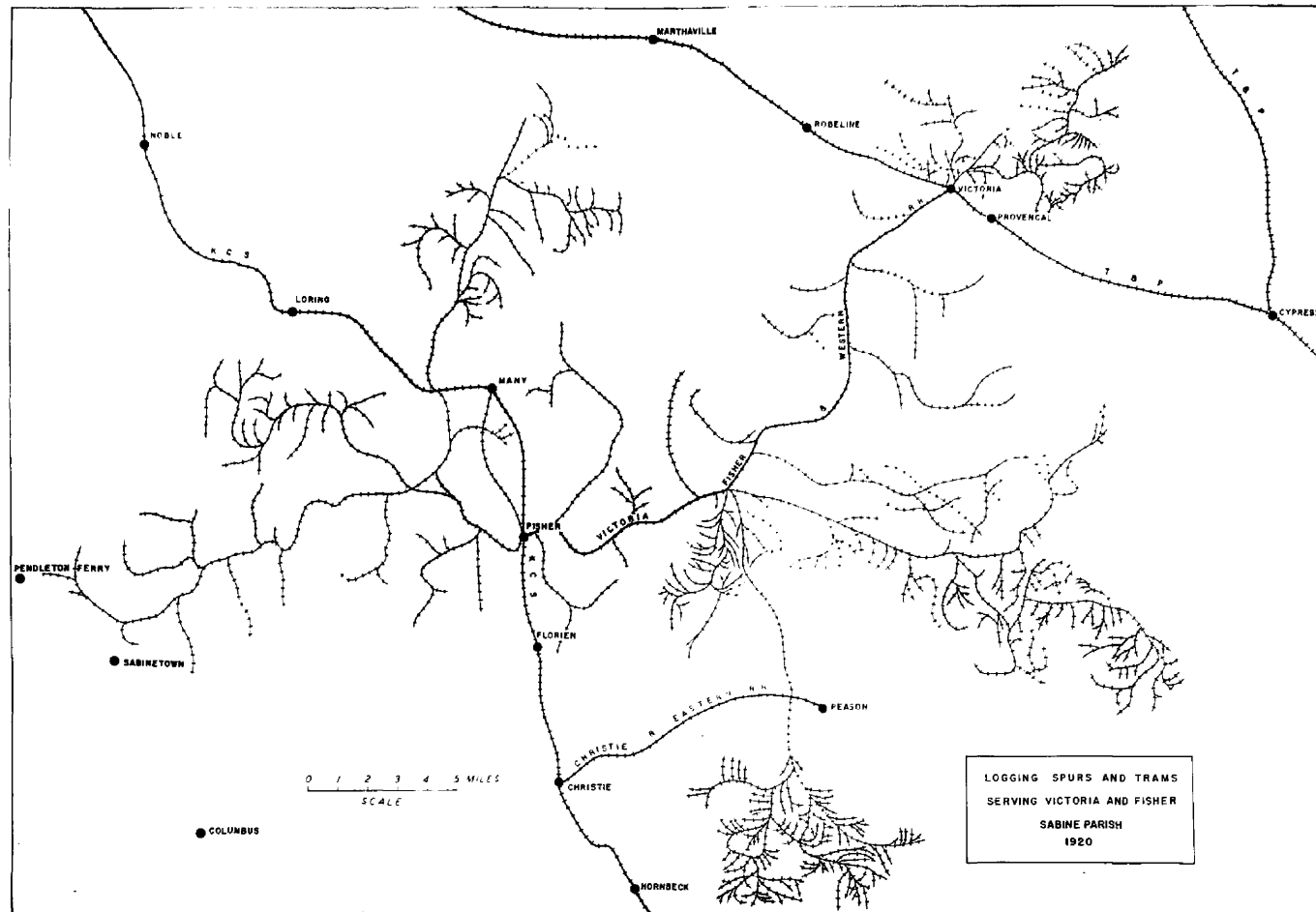
0 1 mile



LOGGING TRAMS ALLEN PARISH, LA.

0 1 mi





Map of tram system serving
Fisher and Victoria.

This was considered the hardest physical labor in the industry, and was done almost exclusively by Negro or Mexican laborers organized into "steel gangs."

Logs bunched at the trams were loaded on flat cars by steam loaders and moved to the mills. Most locomotives were woodburners and were called "rod" engines to distinguish them from the less common "shay." The shay was a small locomotive geared to move heavy loads up steep grades, and lacked speed. Wherever possible rod engines were used, and were much more frequently seen along the trams. Fuel for the engines was stacked along the track by contract haulers, usually men from nearby farms. Examples of these locomotive types are illustrated on page 73 (Figures 4 and 5).

Summary and Conclusions: The longleaf-pine district of southwest Louisiana was practically untouched by loggers before 1895. Logging operations had generally been restricted to lands adjacent to major waterways. Logs moved along the streams to Lake Charles, a major sawmilling center. As the forests of the northern states were exhausted, the demand for southern timber, particularly longleaf pine, grew rapidly. Railroads were built into southwest Louisiana, and logging and milling were inaugurated there on a greatly magnified scale.

The construction and peopling of numerous sawmill towns constituted the most intensive cultural invasion



Figure 4: Rod engine, built by Barham, Barry, Williams and Co., of Philadelphia, 1882. Near Longleaf, Rapides Parish.

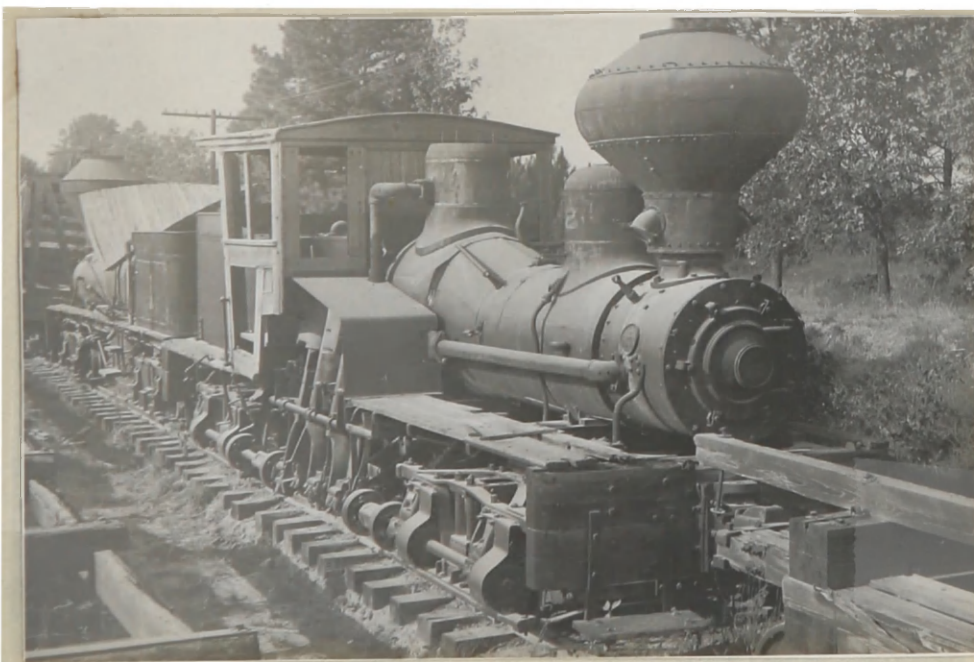


Figure 5: Shay engine, built by Lima Locomotive Works, 1899. Near Longleaf, Rapides Parish.



Figure 6: Work car used to carry workers from town to front. Near Longleaf, Rapides Parish.



Figure 7: Flat cars used in hauling logs. Near Longleaf, Rapides Parish.



Figure 8: Abandoned right-of-way, Cravens to Fullerton, Vernon Parish.



Figure 9: Abandoned right-of-way near Alco, Vernon Parish.

hitherto experienced in southwest Louisiana. Of comparatively short duration, it nevertheless overwhelmed and almost obliterated pre-existing cultural landscape forms. Some it adapted to its own needs and services.

In the course of the three decades following the turn of the century the longleaf forests were destroyed, and the lumber industry, as then constituted, almost ceased to exist in the area.

The impact of the great mills upon the landscape is revealed in the stretches of cutover land and second-growth forest which replaced the virgin longleaf, and in the elements and patterns of human occupation which comprise the visible record of man's activity. This record is, at least in part, the subject of this study.

This investigation comprised essentially an inquiry into the nature and origins of the various physical installations the lumber industry introduced or adopted on a large scale in the pineries of southwest Louisiana. From a study of the sawmill towns and associated features much might be learned of the forms which compose the present-day cultural landscape.

Identified with the sawmill towns are the following: houses of pyramidal, bungalow, single and double log-pen derivatives, and shotgun types; logging trams; mill ponds; and company housing districts or quarters, in which great homogeneity of construction prevails.

All of these elements have persisted. Some have become obscure, but all are visible at sawmill towns still in existence, at the sites of former towns, or where the lumber industry attached its forms and patterns to pre-existing settlements.

No single form is more widely associated with the industry than the pyramidal house. Studies of Louisiana house types have indicated that it is almost universal in its distribution within the state, and that it was introduced chiefly through the agency of lumbering. This report can do little more than lend further substance to this conclusion.

The pyramidal house moved into southwest Louisiana from the north, following the two major railroad lines into the area. The accompanying map (Plate XVII) of house type distributions shows its occurrence in the towns studied, extending southward and finally giving way to other varieties of construction.

Only custom seems to have been involved in the wide adoption of the pyramidal house as a standard type of construction in so many sawmill towns. Apparently the house was popular to the north, and was widely built apart from the lumber industry. The latter was directly responsible for its introduction into the pineries of southwest Louisiana on a large scale. Scores were built in the company towns, and in various modifications the pyramidal roof

saw service in the construction of schools, boarding houses, and other buildings.

As the sawmill towns dissolved, their inhabitants scattered throughout the state, and the pyramidal roof now appears almost everywhere. It is seen in rural areas, but its real significance can best be judged by visits to towns situated in sections of formerly intensive logging, or where active mills with their attendant company houses are still found. Better residential areas exhibit many varieties of the pyramidal roof. New houses are being constructed with this variety of roof and general plan. Figures 10, 11, and 12 illustrate some forms of the contemporary pyramidal house.

The shotgun house is widely associated with lumbering in southwest Louisiana. It entered the longleaf district from two main directions, north and south. The map of house type distributions shows the shotgun to be common in north and south, weakening toward the center of the area.

Some form of the shotgun house was known to the French farmers of southwest Louisiana,² and was already present there when the intensive phase of lumbering began. In areas to the north the shotgun had been adopted by the

² J. W. Taylor, "Southwest Louisiana--A Culturo-geographic Region," Cultural Survey of Louisiana, (Final Status Report, N 7 OHR 35606, 1951), unpublished, p. T-17.



Figure 10: Adaptation of pyramidal roof to larger houses. De Ridder.



Figure 11: Modification of pyramidal roof. De Ridder.



Figure 12: Pyramidal roofs, Oakdale.



Figure 13: Bungalows in Negro quarter, Leesville.

lumber companies, since its qualities made it especially adaptable to their requirements. To ease and cheapness of construction the shotgun house coupled the advantage of extreme portability. It in fact resembles nothing more than a box car without wheels. It was used on a large scale for housing the more transient elements of a working population of, at best, a rather impermanent nature.

Shotgun houses were described as being present in the Negro quarters of fifteen of the twenty towns studied, and were seen in all towns still in existence which were visited. Their numbers are diminishing in the face of an improving level of living which calls for better housing.

Like the shotgun, the bungalow also was known in French south Louisiana,³ and was adopted by the lumber industry as it moved north from the Lake Charles area. Only the most southern towns among those studied were said to have included bungalows.

The house spread rapidly throughout the state as the mill towns disappeared, and its popularity has grown rather than diminished. Bungalows are easily constructed, lend themselves to considerable modification, and have the quality of providing maximum coverage with minimum cost.

The log cabin and its derivatives were present in considerable numbers in the hill areas of the state at the

³Ibid., p. T-17.

outset of intensive lumbering.⁴ Frame equivalents of both the single and double log-pen modes of construction were adopted by lumber companies. As the map of distributions indicates, they were found most frequently in the north and central sections. Numbers of log-pen derivatives are yet to be seen in active sawmill towns. Generally the single log-pen house was built for Negroes, the double log-pen for whites.

Much variation was found among the houses of each type from town to town. A major variable was the material used in their construction. During the early days of lumbering board-and-batten walls were commonly used in all house types. Later, as the towns flourished, company housing improved in quality. Dwellings were enlarged, of more sound construction, with excellent horizontal siding. Many original company houses, continuously occupied for their entire existence, still show only slight deterioration.

Two other elements contributed to the landscape by the lumber industry have persisted to a degree, but are becoming increasingly obscure: the mill pond and the logging tram. In a few places ponds still remain in fair condition, and have acquired new character as recreational spots. Some serve as watering places for cattle, and the

⁴Martin Wright, "The Hill Settlement of Louisiana," Cultural Survey of Louisiana, (Final Status Report, N 7 ONR 35606, 1951), unpublished, p. W-2.

growth of livestock herds may justify the rehabilitation of some of the ponds. Otherwise abandoned ponds seem to have little value, and are being allowed to deteriorate.

Most sawmill towns were centers of radiating systems of logging trams. Though some are used as lanes or secondary roads, most seem doomed to obliteration, and are becoming increasingly obscure.

In the original sawmill towns white and Negro residential areas were invariably separated, usually by some feature, such as the mill, railroad, or belt of woods. This separation is still evident in active sawmill towns, and isolated Negro quarters are seen in other settlements.

When considered as a group, the forms described in these pages make up a most significant portion of the cultural landscape of the area studied, and give ample evidence of the vitality and force of the lumber industry as an agency in its development.

LEGEND

85

 Pyramidal

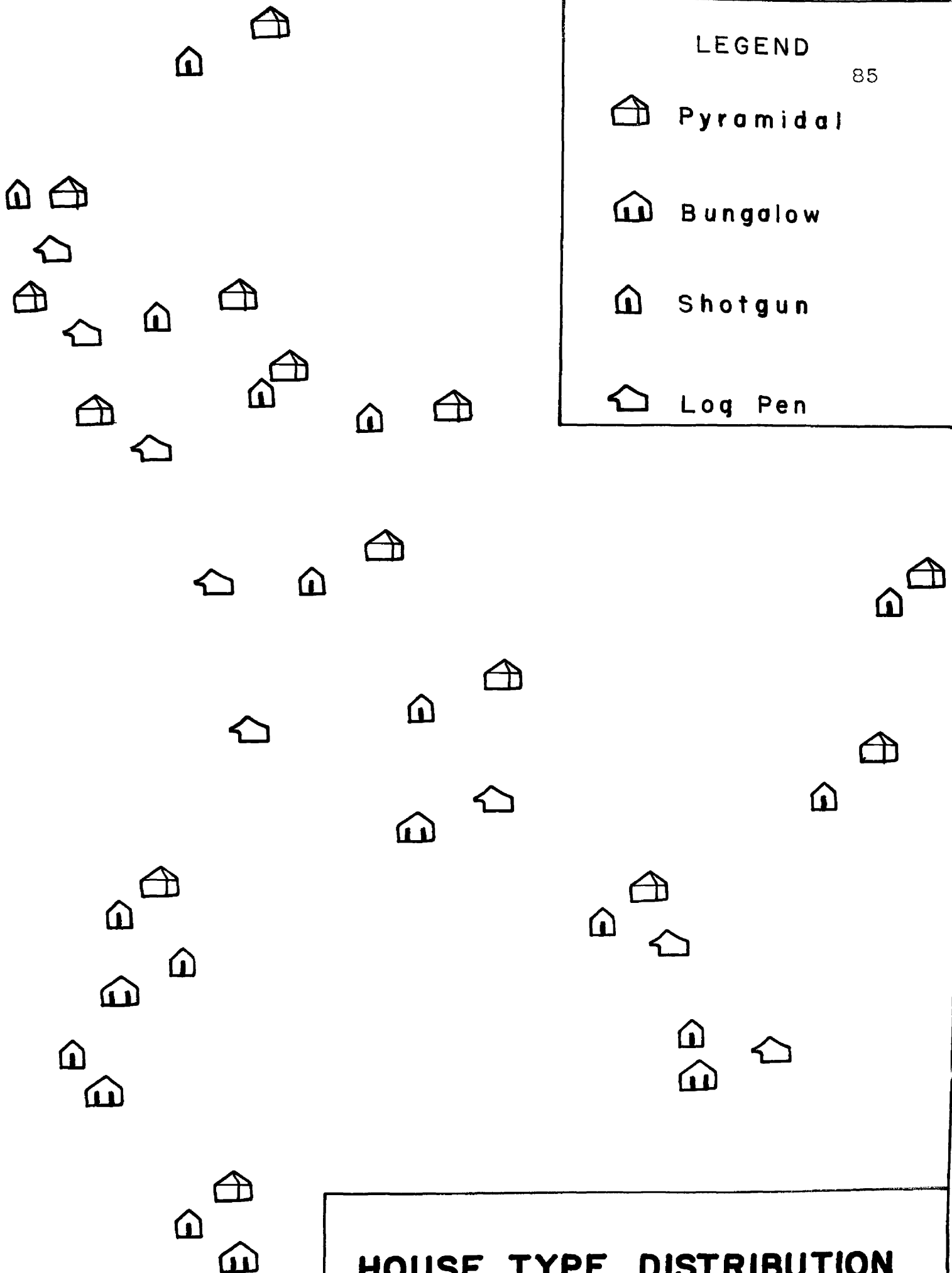
 Bungalow

 Shotgun

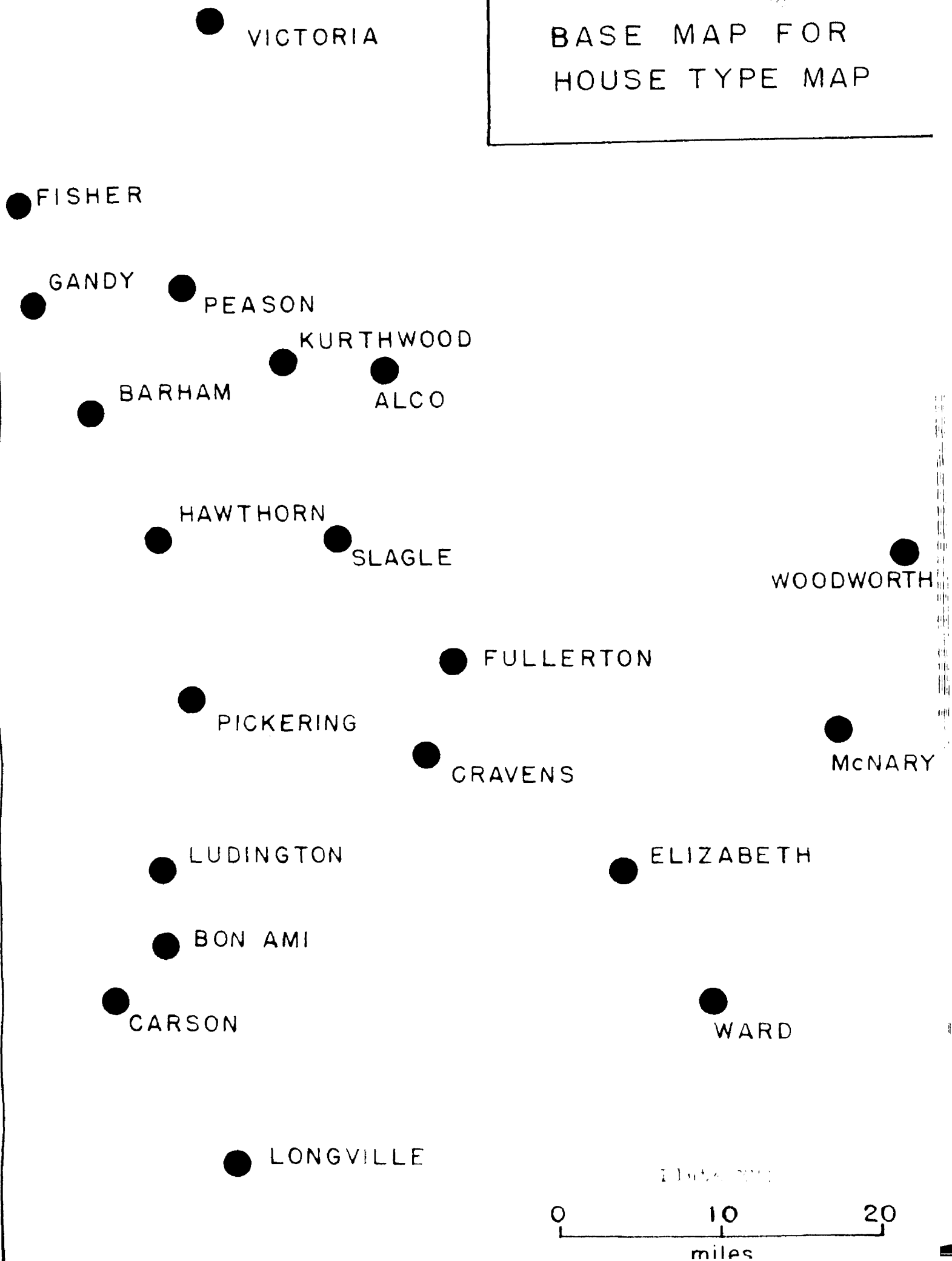
 Log Pen

HOUSE TYPE DISTRIBUTION

PLATE XVII



BASE MAP FOR
HOUSE TYPE MAP



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APPENDIX A
SETTLEMENT STUDIES

APPENDIX A

SETTLEMENT STUDIES

The course of this study led to the accumulation of a considerable body of information concerning the saw-mill towns. Literature relative to the origin, existence, and decline of specific communities is extremely deficient, that examined being not only scant but couched in the most general terms. It is hoped that the inclusion of the following information as an appendix to this study will in some measure remedy this deficiency. The material contained herein may have sociological and historical value.

Each of the twenty settlement descriptions which follow embraces at least four elements: a written account of the town, a map, floor plans of company houses, and photographs.

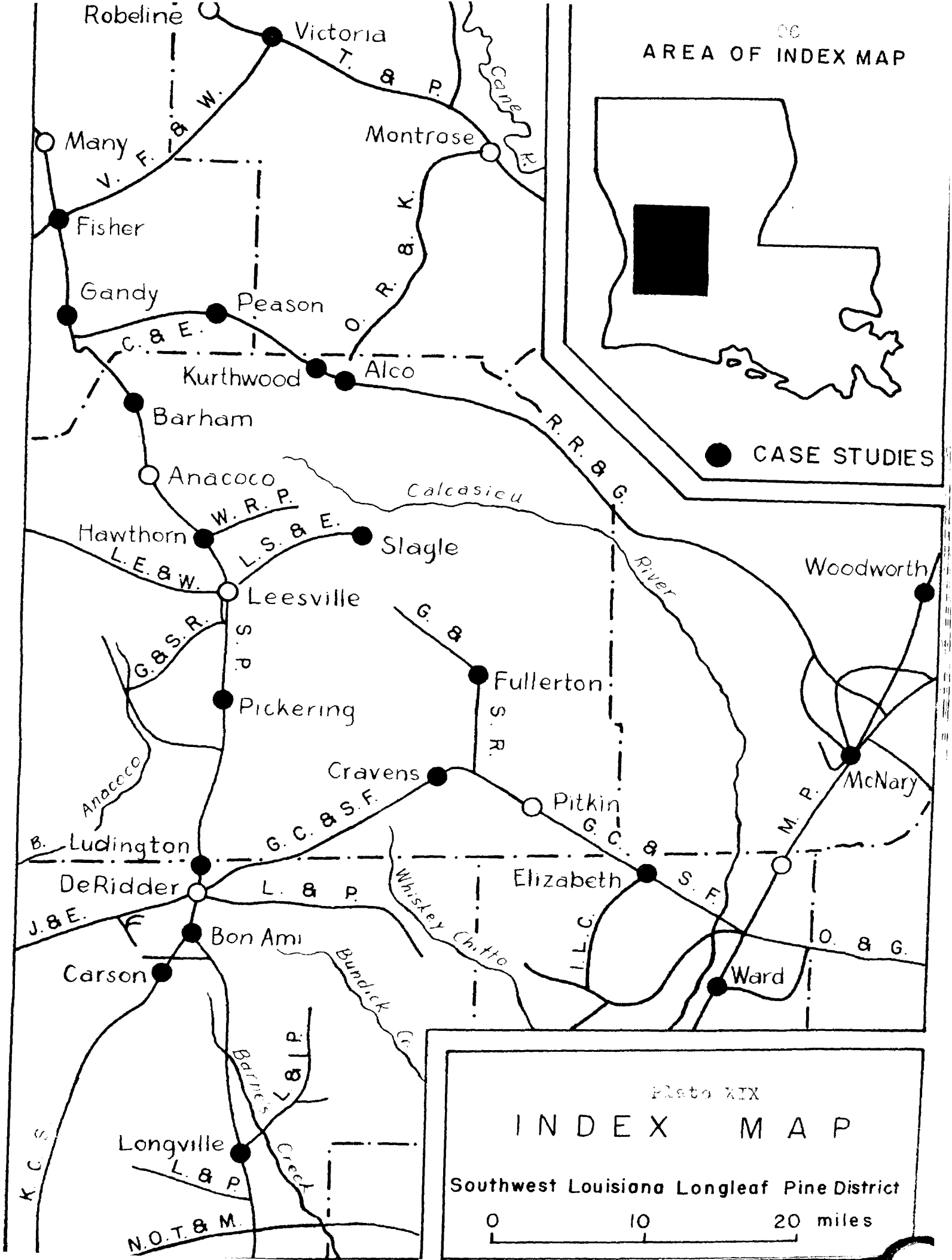
Written descriptions include the major facts of the town's time and place of existence, and details of its character, composition, and administration.

Sketch maps were prepared with the help of former residents, and vary in completeness with the information they revealed. It is believed that the maps are substantially correct.

The company house floor plans are essentially elaborations on descriptions given in the text. Original company houses are fast disappearing, and these plans were

drawn with a view toward preserving some details of their construction. Broken lines in the diagrams indicate breaks in the roofs.

The photographs are also closely supplementary to the descriptions. In some instances it was possible to show only photos of the abandoned sites. A number of pictures are included, to which no specific reference is made in the text. Their inclusion serves to complete the picture of the former cultural landscape, and make its identification with the present more exact.



ALCO

Alco, Vernon Parish, was one of the last sawmill towns, and was founded by the Alexandria Lumber Company, operations beginning in 1923. It was situated on the Red River and Gulf Railway, a line which ran westward from Longleaf on the Missouri Pacific to Sandel on the Kansas City Southern. In 1928 the town and mill were purchased by C. T. Crowell. The Crowell mill at Meridian, Evangeline Parish, had been destroyed by fire, and the entire crew was transferred to Alco.¹

The mill assembly included a pine mill, a planer mill, dry kilns, a lumber yard, a standpipe, machine shop, and a large mill pond. A corral and barn near the mill housed the mules used for grading logging trams.

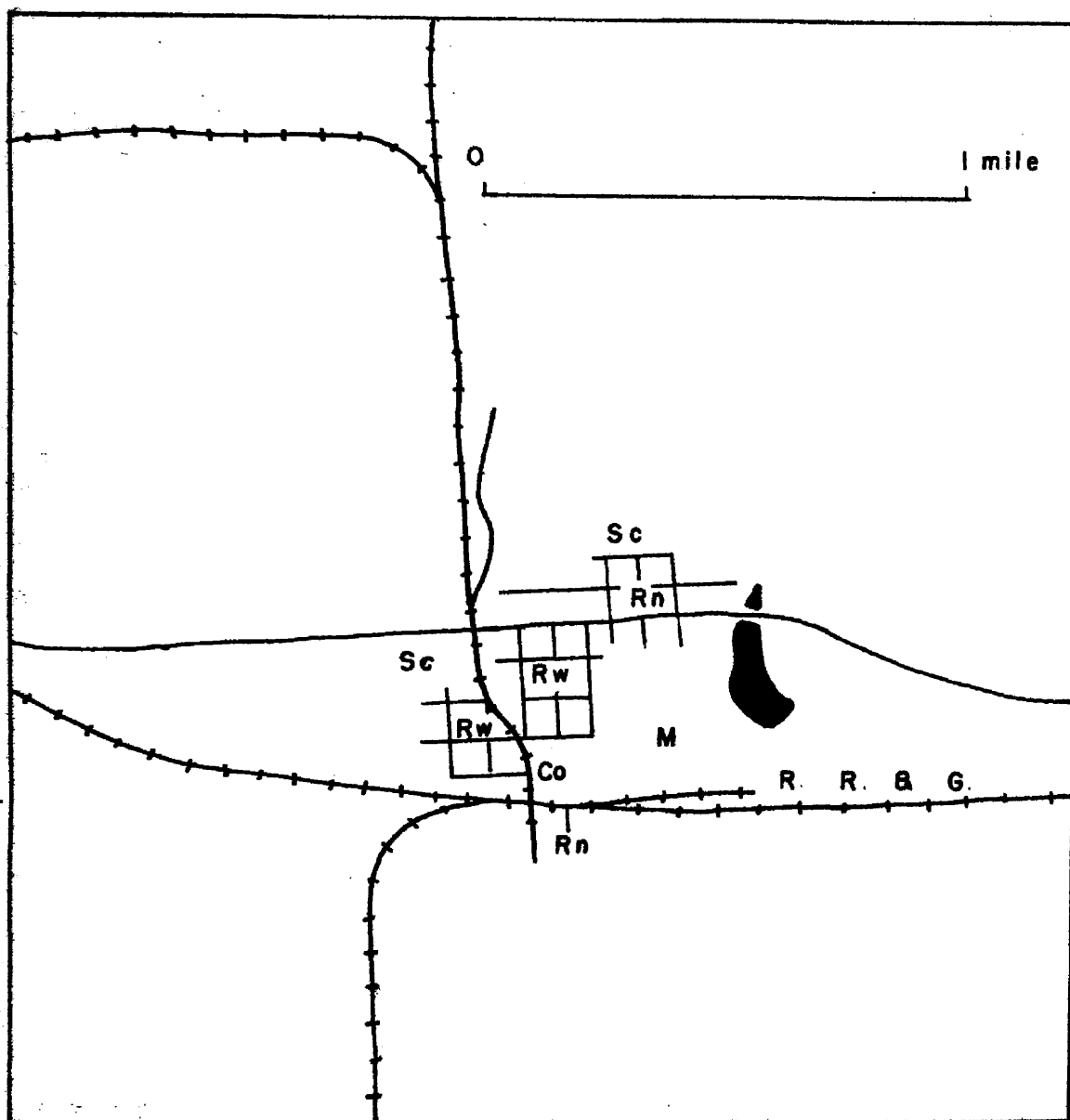
Alco included boarding houses and schools for white and colored, the mill offices, and a commissary. There was also a depot, doctor's office and drug store, barber shop, and post office. Generators at the mill provided electricity for the town, and all sections enjoyed running water.

The 1930 population was about 1,000, but earlier the town reportedly held as many as 2,000 people, white and Negro. Most came from other settlements where operations were slowing down or had halted altogether.

¹Boyd, op. cit., p. 28.

For the most part white families lived in pyramidal houses of unusual design. The porch roof was formed by extending the roof of the house at the same angle of slope, so that it made a single continuing panel projecting beyond the wall over the porch. The dwellings were painted white, and were well-constructed.

Negro families occupied both pyramidal and shotgun houses, air photos indicating that the latter were far more numerous. The Negro dwellings were well spaced, with large yards, and were situated on what seem to have been well-kept streets, in sharp contrast to the generally makeshift arrangement of such quarters in other towns.



Co- COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

M- MILL

Rw- RESIDENTIAL, WHITE

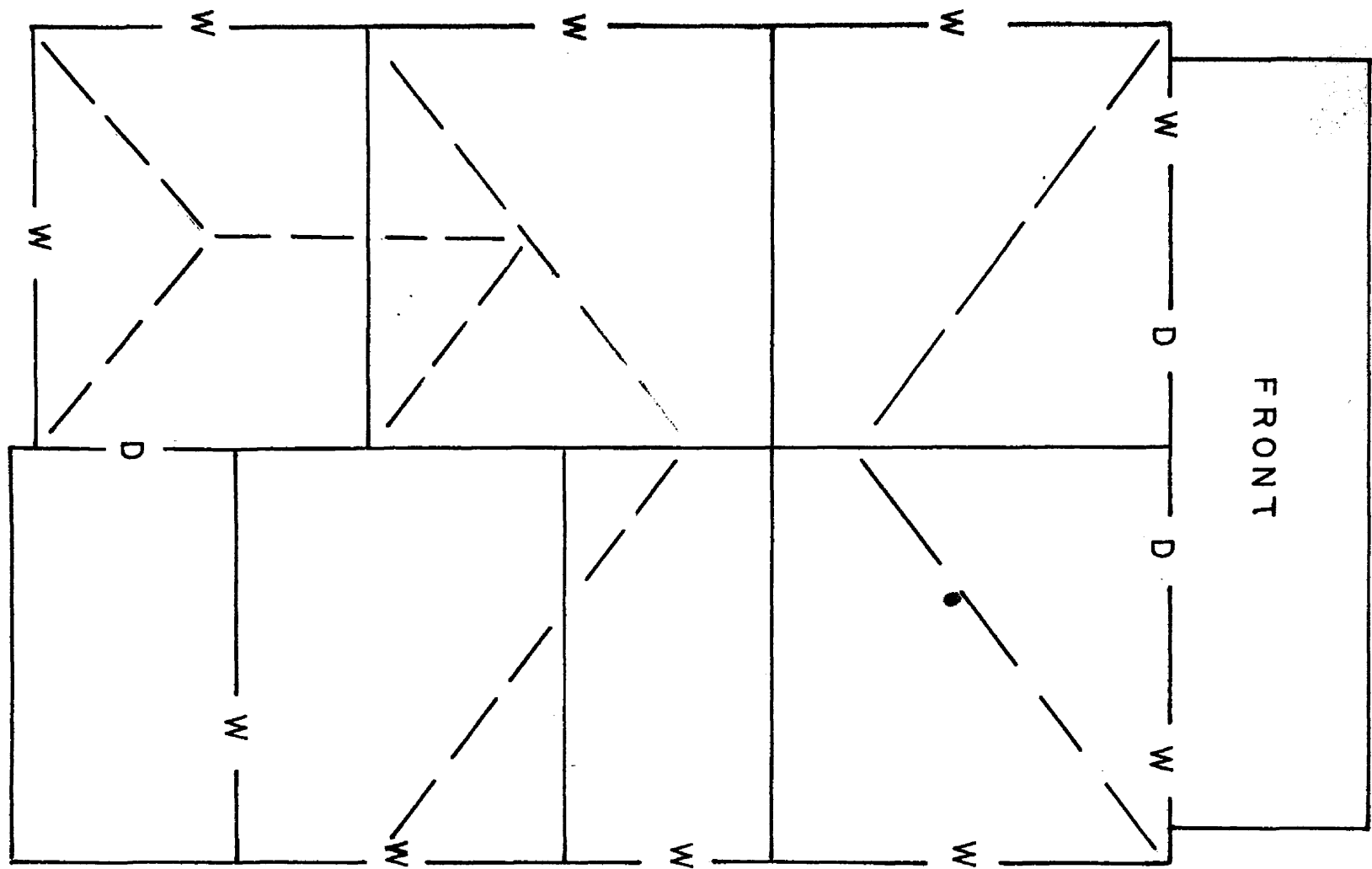
Rn- RESIDENTIAL, NEGRO

Sc- SCHOOL

ALCO

Vernon Parish, La.

Plan 1



Company House Floor Plan

ALCO PYRAMIDAL

1" = 5



Figure 14: Alce company house, pyramidal type.



Figure 15: Side and rear view of house shown above.



Figure 16: Alco post office, formerly a storeroom for company records.



Figure 17: Alco mill pond.



Figure 18: View of Alco site.



Figure 19: View of Alco site.

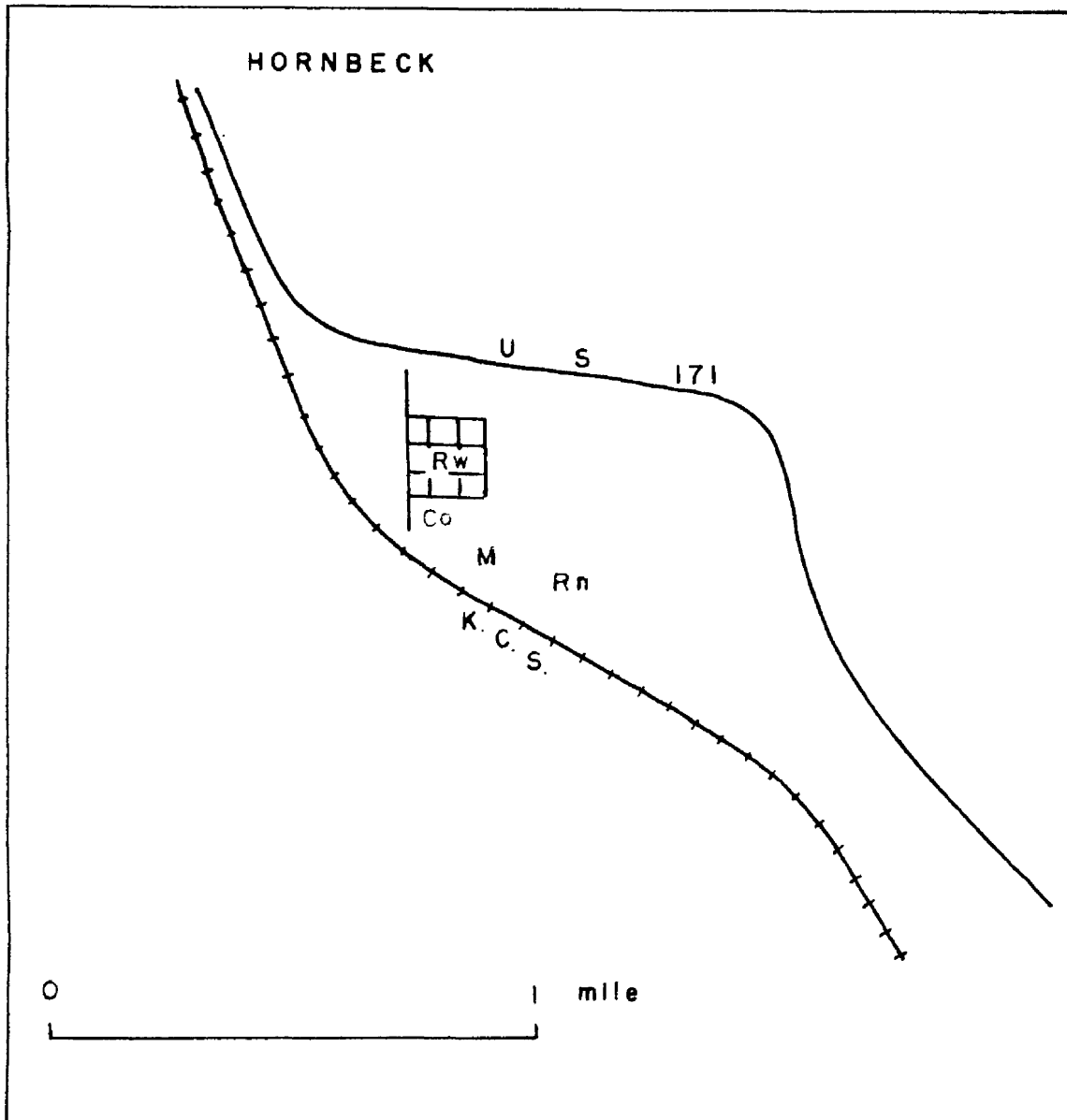
BARHAM

Barham came into existence about 1902, when the W. R. Pickering Lumber Company began operations in north-western Vernon Parish. Ownership later passed to the Weber-King Lumber Company. It seems evident that the town was on the decline as early as 1920, the census of that year indicating a population of only 250. Earlier the mill had employed more than 300 men. The company houses were sold in 1927, and either dismantled or removed.

The plant included a pine mill, a planer mill, dry kilns, a lumber yard, machine shop, and a mill pond. A corral and barn stood near the mill to accommodate the dolly-run mules and others used at the front. Generators at the mill provided electricity for the entire settlement. Residents obtained water from dug wells at their homes. The company operated a commissary, and a doctor was kept on call for all employees and their families.

The commercial district included a barber shop, post office, and depot. There were boarding houses for both white and colored, and elementary schools and churches for each race.

House types were limited to pyramidal and single log-pen dwellings, occupied by whites and Negroes respectively.



Co - COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

M - MILL

Rw - RESIDENTIAL, WHITE

Rn - RESIDENTIAL, NEGRO

BARHAM

Vernon Parish, La.



Figure 20: View of Barham site.



Figure 21: View of Barham site.

BON AMI

Bon Ami, Beauregard Parish, was established by the Long Bell Lumber Company. Construction at the site began in 1898, and operations were initiated by 1901. Work there ceased in 1925.

Situated about three miles south of De Ridder on the Kansas City Southern Railway, Bon Ami marked the junction of that line with the Louisiana and Pacific, which in 1901 ran from Bon Ami directly south to Lake Charles. The latter eventually became part of the Southern Pacific system. Both railroads had stations in Bon Ami.

The Bon Ami plant handled only pine timber, and had an annual capacity of from fifty-five to sixty million board feet of lumber. Facilities included a pine mill, planer mill, machine shop, dry kilns, lumber yard, and mill pond. A barn and corral at the mill housed mules used there, and a standpipe and generators furnished water and lights to the entire town.

Two boarding houses for whites and one for Negroes were operated in the settlement, along with the usual commissary and company offices. Schools were provided for children of both races, classes extending through the seventh grade.

Recreational facilities in Bon Ami were unusual, since they included a recreation hall for Negroes, and a Young Men's Christian Association building for whites.

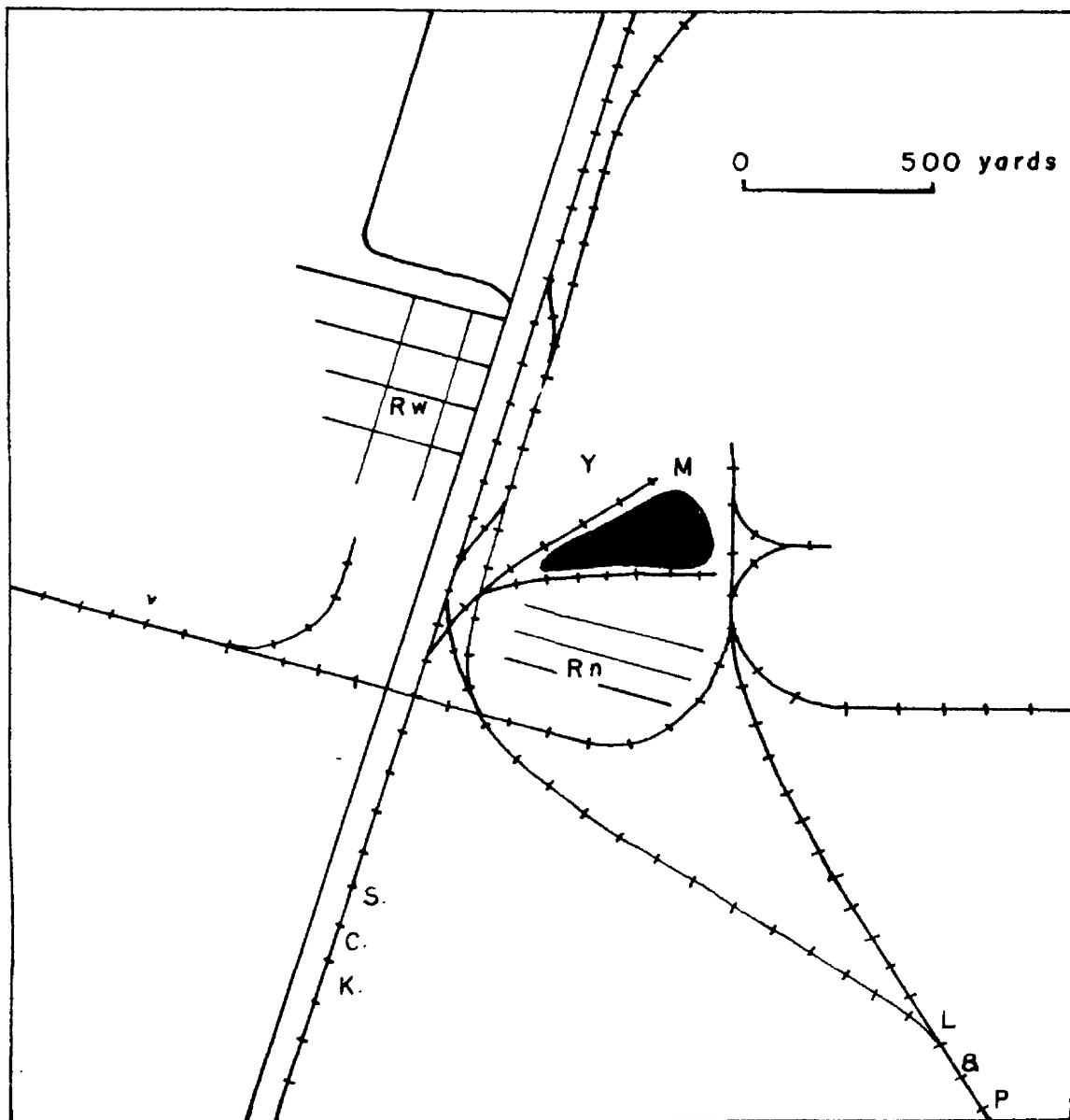
The latter seems to have been an imposing structure, holding a theater, soda fountain, bowling alleys, and a barber shop.

There were two churches in the settlement, for whites and Negroes, a doctor's office, where drugs were dispensed by the company physician, and a postoffice.

The population of Bon Ami was not determined, but estimates placed the figure at about 1,500 for most of its existence. A number of the families there were said to have come to the town directly from Arkansas.

Information with regard to house types at Bon Ami was not clear, but suggested that the principal types represented were the bungalow and the shotgun, occupied by white and Negro families respectively.

Considerable evidence of the nature of the original settlement was observed at the Bon Ami site. The mill pond was in good condition, and the remains of the mill were seen at its northern end. The large wooden structures which are shown in the accompanying photographs of the site are part of a planer mill recently operated there.



M- MILL

Rw-RESIDENTIAL, WHITE

Rn-RESIDENTIAL, NEGRO

Y- YARD

BON AMI

Beauregard Parish, La.

Plate XIII



Figure 22: View of Bon Ami site.



Figure 23: View of Bon Ami site.



Figure 24: View of Bon Ami site.



Figure 25: View of Bon Ami site.

CARSON

In 1903 the Carson plant was built in Beauregard Parish by the Central Coal and Coke Company of Oklahoma. After World War I this very large concern was reorganized, and the Carson properties renamed the Delta Land and Timber Company. Operations ceased at 5:30 p. m., Thanksgiving Day, 1926.

The mill had a daily capacity of about 100,000 board feet, and included a pine mill, planer mill, dry kilns, lumber yard, machine shop, and a large mill pond, now Carson Lake. Also in the mill area were the generators and standpipe, supplying electricity and water to the entire town, and the barn and corral for the twenty or thirty mules used at the mill.

In the commercial section were the commissary and offices, a combined doctor's office and drug store, a barber shop, post office, and ice cream parlor.

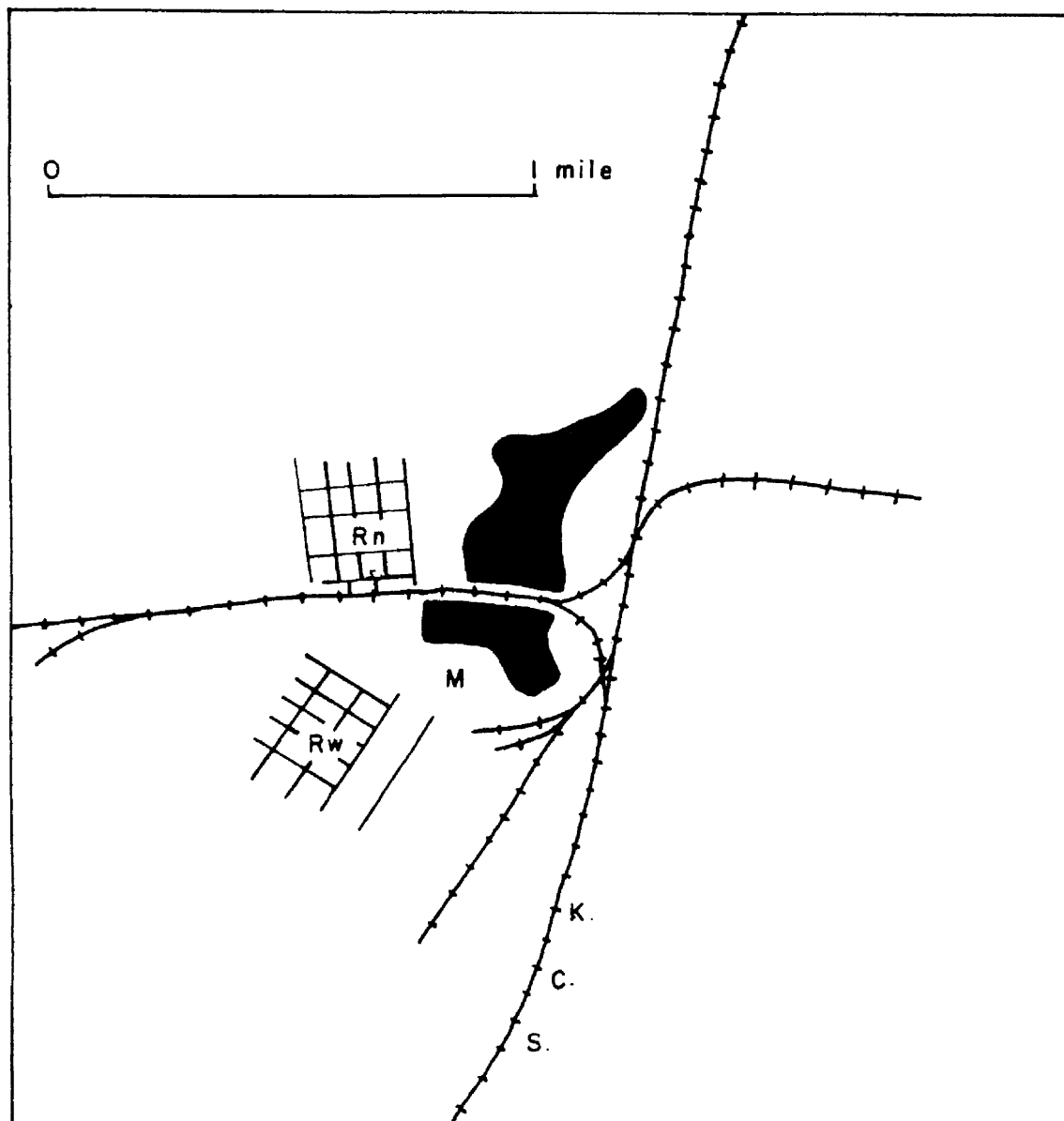
A boarding house for whites was operated in the settlement, and two were provided for Negroes. Schools for both races offered classes through the seventh grade. Children of high school age were sent to De Ridder. White residents attended a Union church, while the Negro quarter boasted three houses of worship. Two cemeteries were opened at Carson, one white and one Negro.

The former residents interviewed described Carson

as the "best sawmill town in the world," and its attractions make an impressive list. The commissary operated a free delivery service, and ice was delivered to each dwelling every morning. Italian peddlers from De Ridder were encouraged by the company to compete with the commissary. Motion pictures were shown at the company theater three nights a week. There was no admission fee, and showings were attended by both whites and Negroes. Medical care was paid for by individual assessment. Each man paid a monthly fee, for which he and his family received the care of the company doctor, and all drugs prescribed by him. This fee, in the case of married men, was \$1.25, and for single men \$1.00.

In spite of generous policies the company was sometimes in short supply with regard to labor. The quarterboss acted as chief recruiter of labor, white and colored, a task which sometimes led him into neighboring towns in search of experienced men. His time was also devoted to supervising the crew of night watchmen, and renting the company houses. These duties he discharged in addition to his principal function as parish deputy.

At Carson white families occupied bungalows, an example of which appears in the accompanying photograph. This particular house is somewhat larger than most homes in the settlement. Negro houses were described as simple bungalows and shotgun houses. All homes in the town were of good construction and painted gray, white, yellow, or brown.



M - MILL

Rw - RESIDENTIAL, WHITE

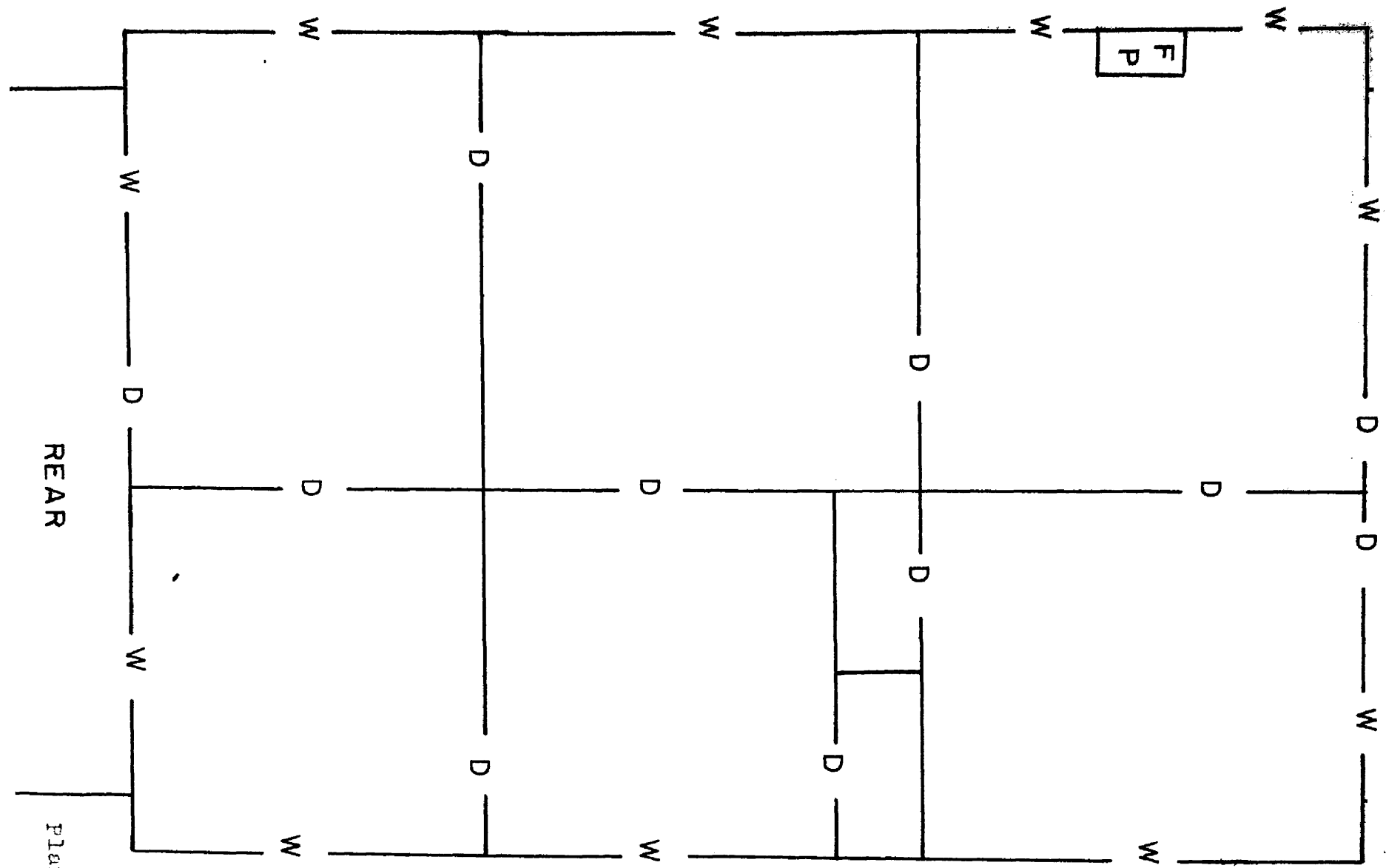
Rn - RESIDENTIAL, NEGRO

CARSON

Beauregard Parish, La.

FRONT

115



Company House Floor Plan
CARSON BUNGALOW
1" = 5'

REAR

Plan 2



Figure 26: Carson company house, bungalow type.



Figure 27: View of Carson site.

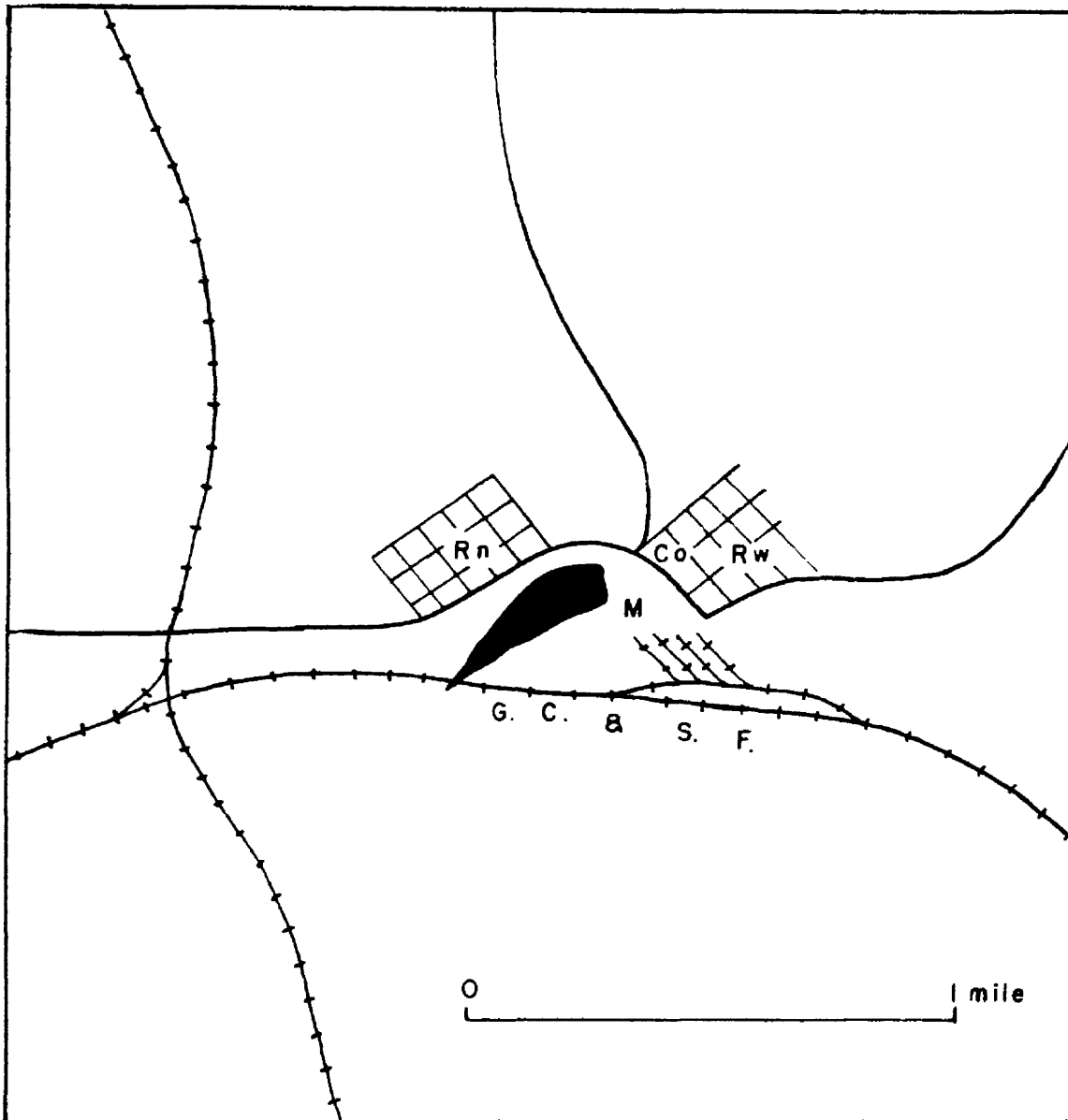
CRAVENS

The W. I. Pickering Lumber Company established Cravens in southwest Vernon Parish in 1905, and operated a mill there until 1925. Cravens represented the larger and more elaborate sawmill town. The plant included a pine mill, planer mill, dry kilns, lumber yard, machine shop, corral, barn, and mill pond. Two standpipes at the mill furnished water to the settlement, and generators there provided electricity. The Cravens mill was moved to Urania when operations at the former location ceased.

Boarding houses were built in the town for workers of both races, that for whites being a two-story structure of fifty rooms. Schools were operated for whites and Negroes, a duplication along racial lines which was extended to include two churches and two cemeteries. In the commercial district were the commissary, company offices, ice house, depot, doctor's office, barber shop, and post office.

Most residents were recruited from among the native population, but some of the more responsible positions were held by men brought from Kansas City, Missouri.

Company houses were of two types, bungalows, for whites, and single log-pen for Negroes. None of the original company houses was seen at the site.



Co- COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

M- MILL

Rw- RESIDENTIAL, WHITE

Rn- RESIDENTIAL, NEGRO

CRAVENS

Vernon Parish, La.

Plate MAPV



Figure 28: View of Cravens site. Wooded section is former pond area.



Figure 29: Abandoned Gulf, Colorado and Santa Fe right-of-way at Cravens.

ELIZABETH

Elizabeth, northern Allen Parish, was founded by the Industrial Lumber Company in 1907, but, due to unsettled economic conditions, operations were not begun there until 1909.¹

The mill at Elizabeth continued to run until about 1921. In 1923 an attempt was made to open a paper mill there, but this effort ended in failure. Another, in 1926, was successful. Elizabeth can no longer be considered a sawmill town, but its appearance and organization along company lines are little altered.

The town early won the reputation of being attractive, through special efforts on the part of the company. The mill included a pine mill, planer mill, dry kilns, lumber yard, corral and barn, machine shop, and mill pond. Two turpentine stills were operated near the mill. Water and electricity were furnished to the town by a standpipe and generators at the mill.

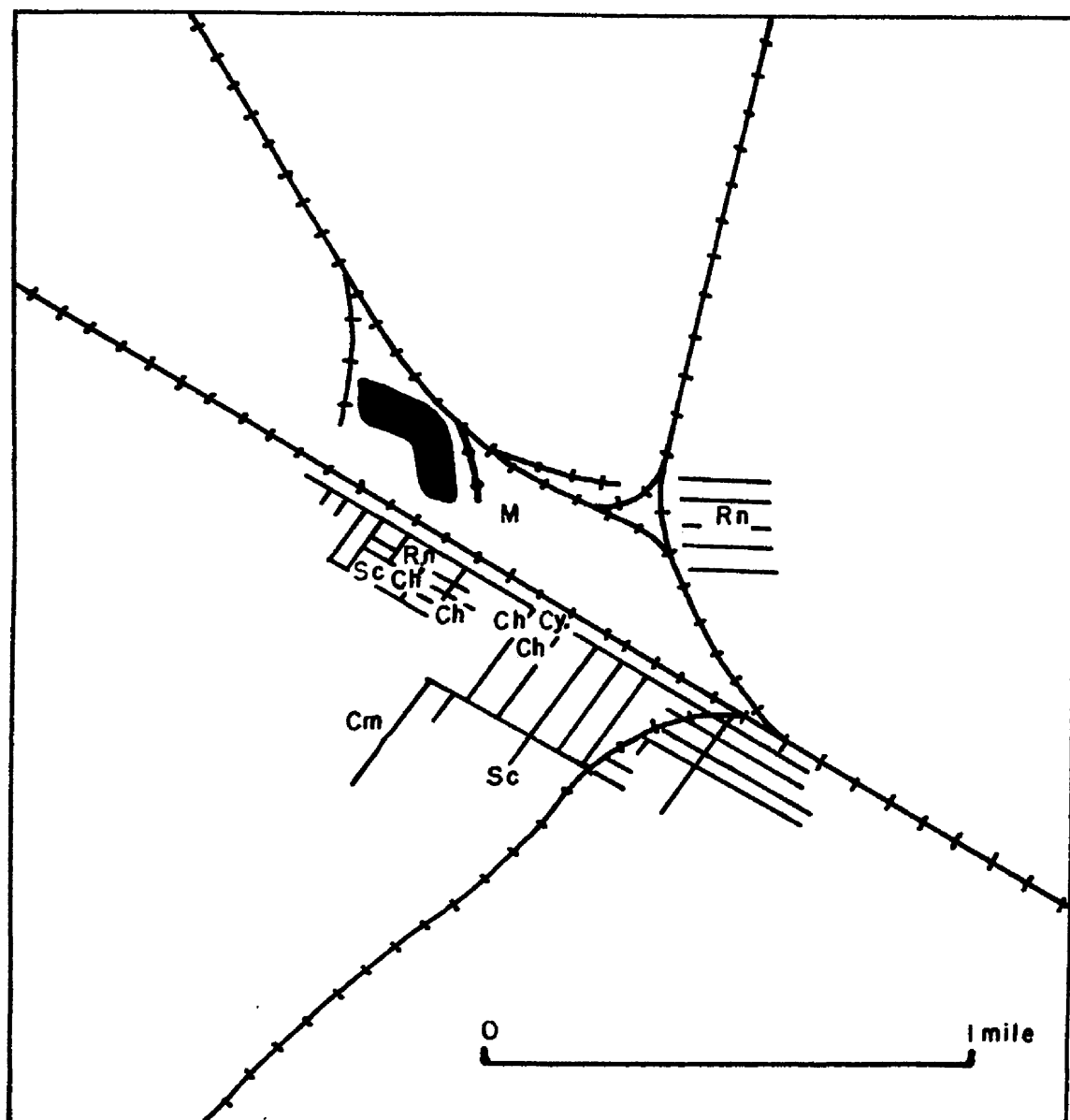
In the business district were the company offices, commissary, drug store, barber shop, a bakery, beauty parlor, theater, and post office. The commissary and most other businesses were operated by the A. B. Finke Company, which paid the lumber company a percentage of its profits.

¹Boyd, op. cit., p. 28.

The company maintained a hospital staffed by three physicians and several nurses. Two hotels were operated for whites, and one for Negroes. Schools for both races offered classes through the seventh grade. At first, a Union church was used by the white residents, and later two others were built. Two churches stood in the Negro quarter.

As a sawmill town Elizabeth had a population of roughly 1,500, recruited largely from local inhabitants. Some families were brought by the company from their mill at Vinton, Louisiana.

The original company houses included pyramidal, shotgun, and single log-pen types. Pyramidal and log-pen dwellings were occupied by white families. Negroes lived in log-pen and shotgun houses. White residences were painted a uniform white, and the Negro stained a dark red. Most of the larger homes were adapted to accommodate two families, and some were so occupied when the settlement was visited during the course of this study.



Ch- CHURCH

Cy- COMMISSARY

Cm-CEMETERY

M- MILL

Rw- RESIDENTIAL, WHITE

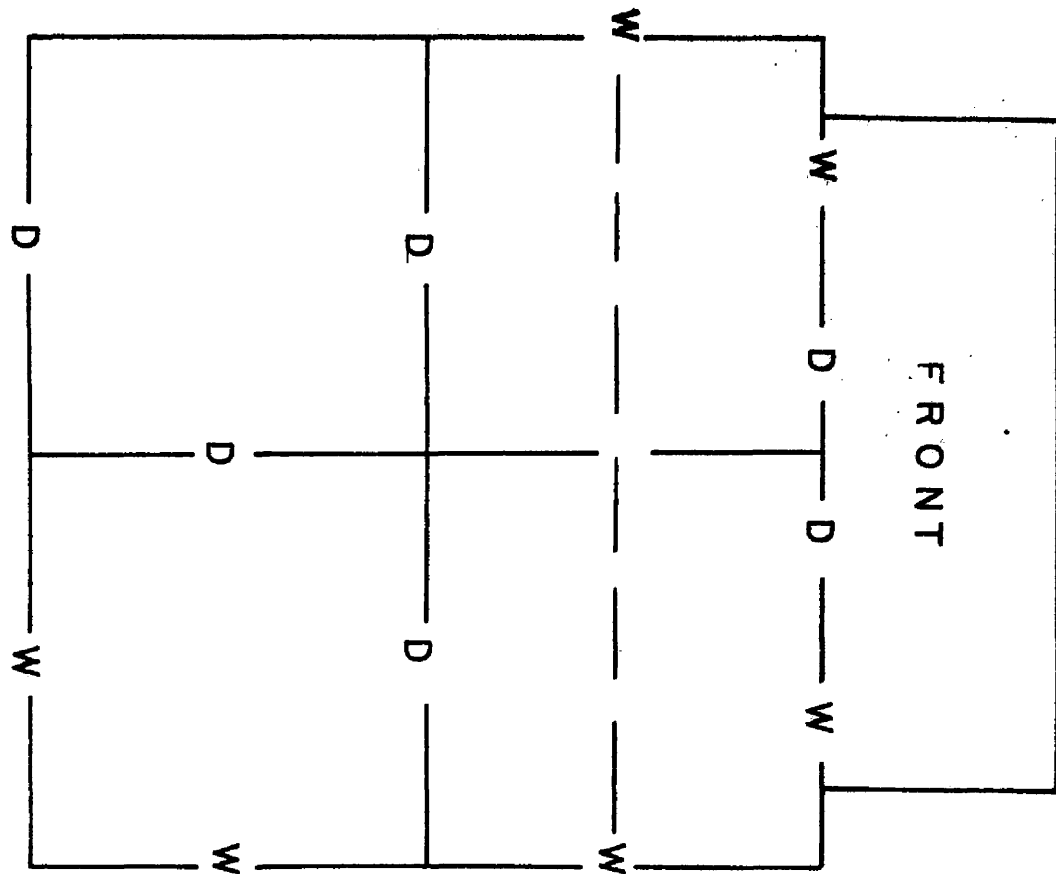
Rn- RESIDENTIAL, NEGRO

Sc- SCHOOL

ELIZABETH

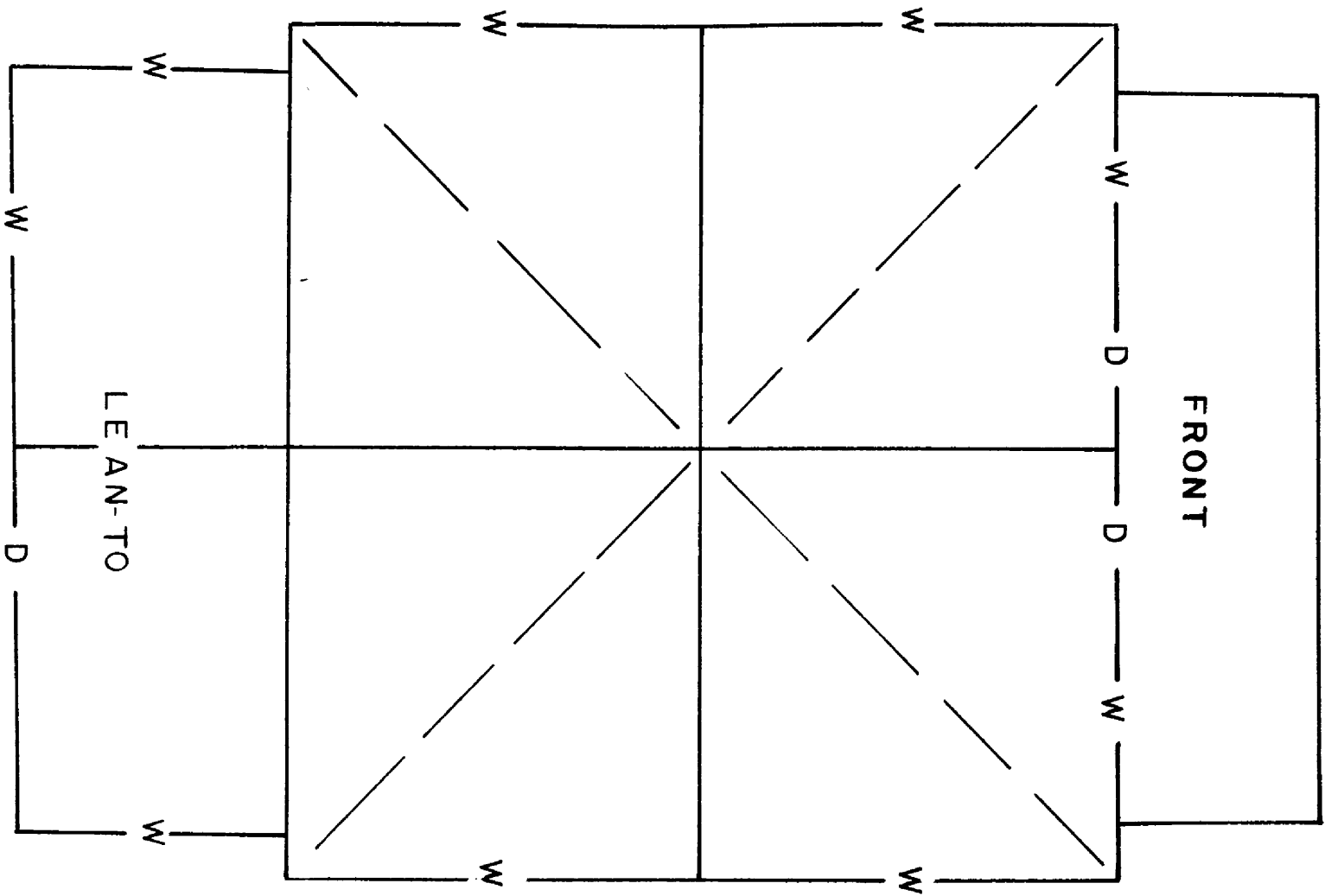
Allen Parish, La.

Plate XXV

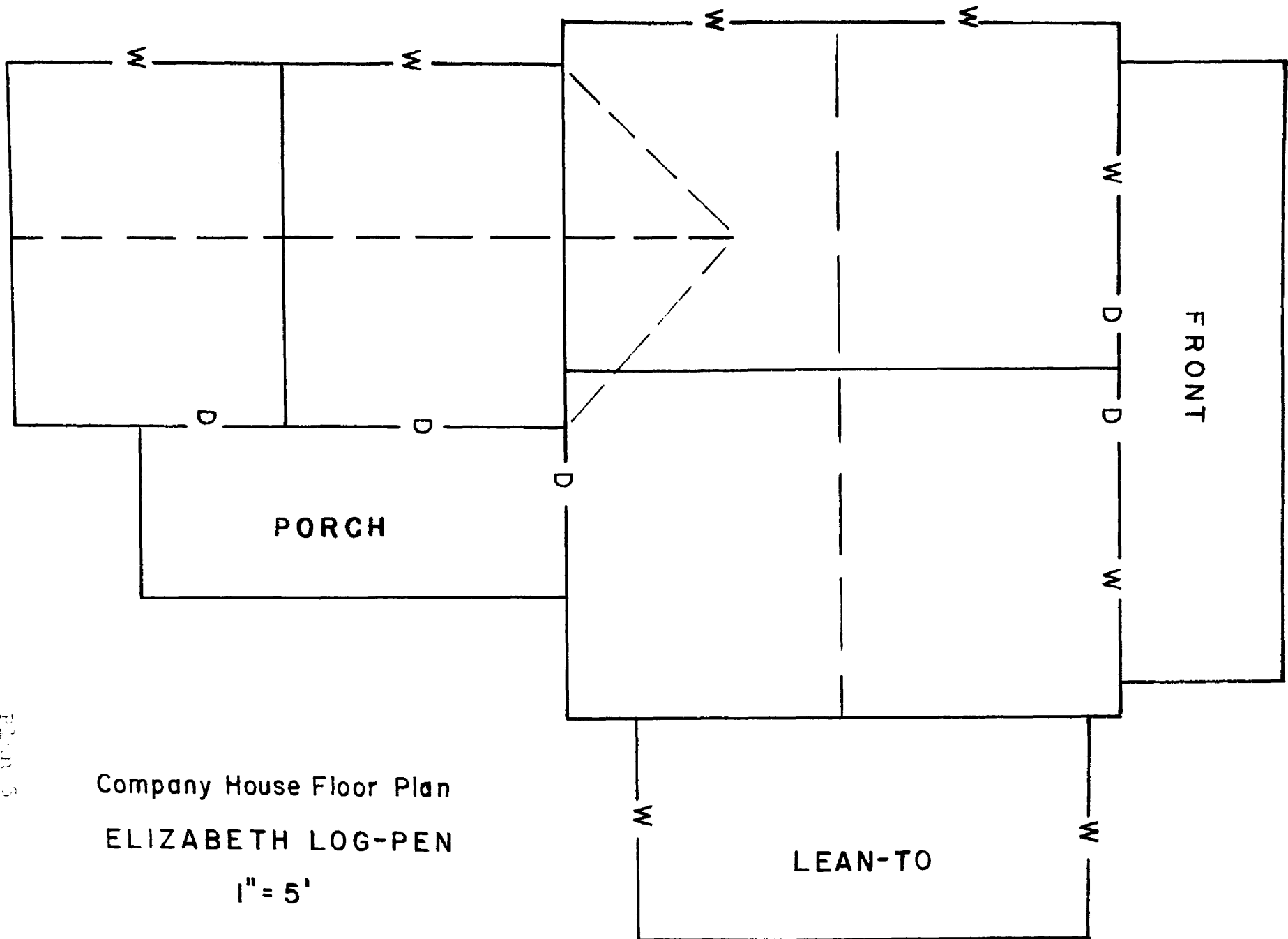


Company House Floor Plan
ELIZABETH LOG-PEN

1" = 5'



Company House Floor Plan
 ELIZABETH PYRAMIDAL
 1" = 5'



Company House Floor Plan
 ELIZABETH LOG-PEN
 1" = 5'

PLAN 5

125



Figure 30: View of Elizabeth business district.



Figure 31: Elizabeth motion picture theater.



Figure 32: Boarding house, Elizabeth.



Figure 33: School, Elizabeth.



Figure 34: Methodist Church, Elizabeth.



**Figure 35: Negro company house, Elizabeth.
Log-pen type, stained dark red.**



Figure 36: White company house, Elizabeth. Log-pen type, painted white, with lean-to.



Figure 37: White company house, Elizabeth. Pyramical type, painted white, with lean-to.

FISHER

Fisher, Sabine Parish, is one of the few sawmill towns to survive in its original form. The town was built by the Louisiana Longleaf Lumber Company in 1899, and this organization has operated the mill continuously since that year. Steam skidders were never used on these holdings, and uncut trees were not destroyed, allowing natural forest regeneration to proceed.

Various reasons were given concerning the decision not to use steam skidders. It was said that they were not used in order to "save the woods," but lumbermen of that day were not particularly concerned with reforestation. It seems more likely that economic considerations of an immediate nature were the principal factors involved.

According to company records, pine lumber of the best quality sold in 1899 for an average price of \$6.44 a thousand board feet. By 1914 this had risen to only \$12.27 a thousand. At the mill a man could fill his wagon with his choice of the best lumber for a dollar. Steam skidders were expensive, and the low prices prevalent at the turn of the century precluded their immediate purchase.

Moreover, timber in the Fisher area occurred in mixed sizes, and selective logging was necessary, since only the best lumber could be sold at a profit. To the south the timber was "all big," and the skidders could take almost everything. At Fisher logs were moved to the trams

first by oxen, later by mules.

Some early Fisher residents were brought by the company from Greenville, Wayne County, southeastern Missouri. Others were natives of Sabine Parish, and for a time Mexican laborers were used at the front. In 1936 some families moved from Victoria to Fisher, when the former mill cut out.

The Fisher mill assembly includes a pine mill, planer mill, dry kilns, lumber yard, machine shop, mill pond, and barn and corral. Water and lights for the town are furnished by facilities at the mill.

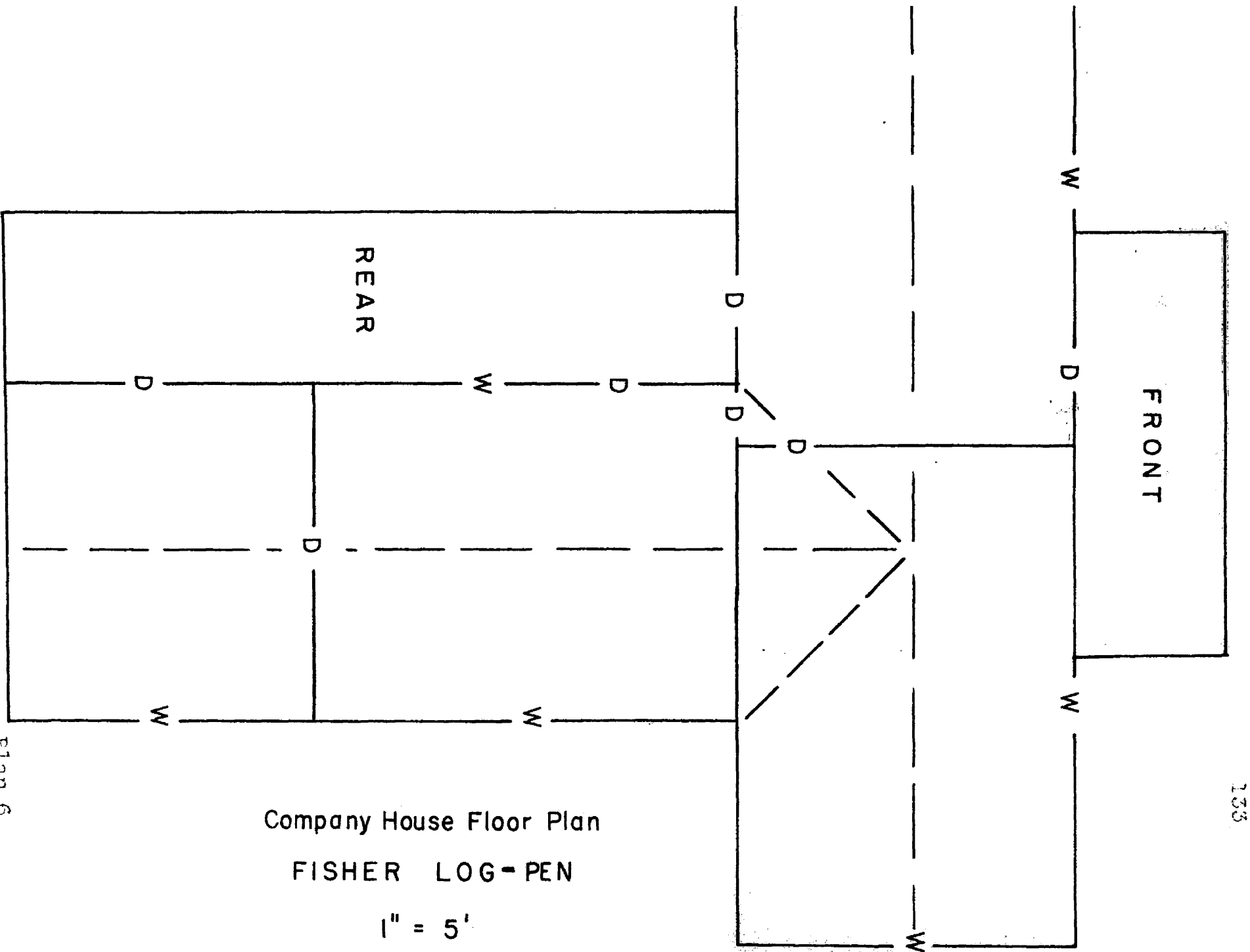
The commercial section contains a boarding house, commissary, company office, ice house, depot, barber shop, and theater. Another boarding house is located in the residential section. A small cafe is operated in the commissary building. A trained nurse lives in Fisher, and the company also retains a doctor who resides in Many.

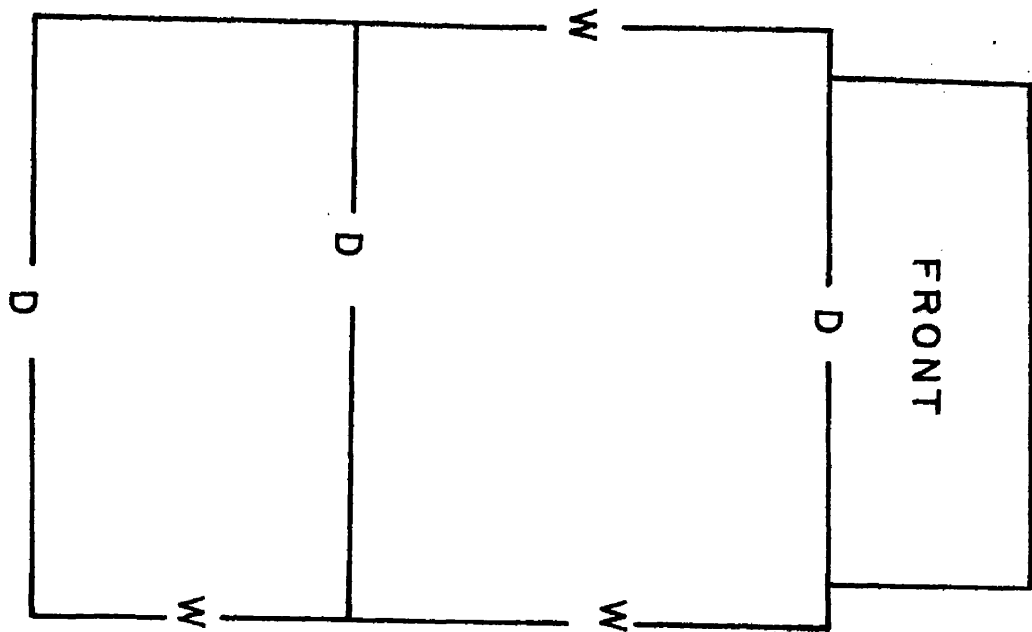
Fisher house types include the log-pen and shotgun, occupied by whites and Negroes respectively. Some of the older Negro homes are of the log-pen variety. Other types are few in number, and in general company housing seems to have altered slightly. Changes are related mainly to the improvement of already-present types. In the white residential section heavy unpainted boards have given way to excellent horizontal siding, painted buff. Lean-tos have been attached to many Negro shotgun houses.

Sc - SCHOOL

Sabine Parish, La.

Plate XVII

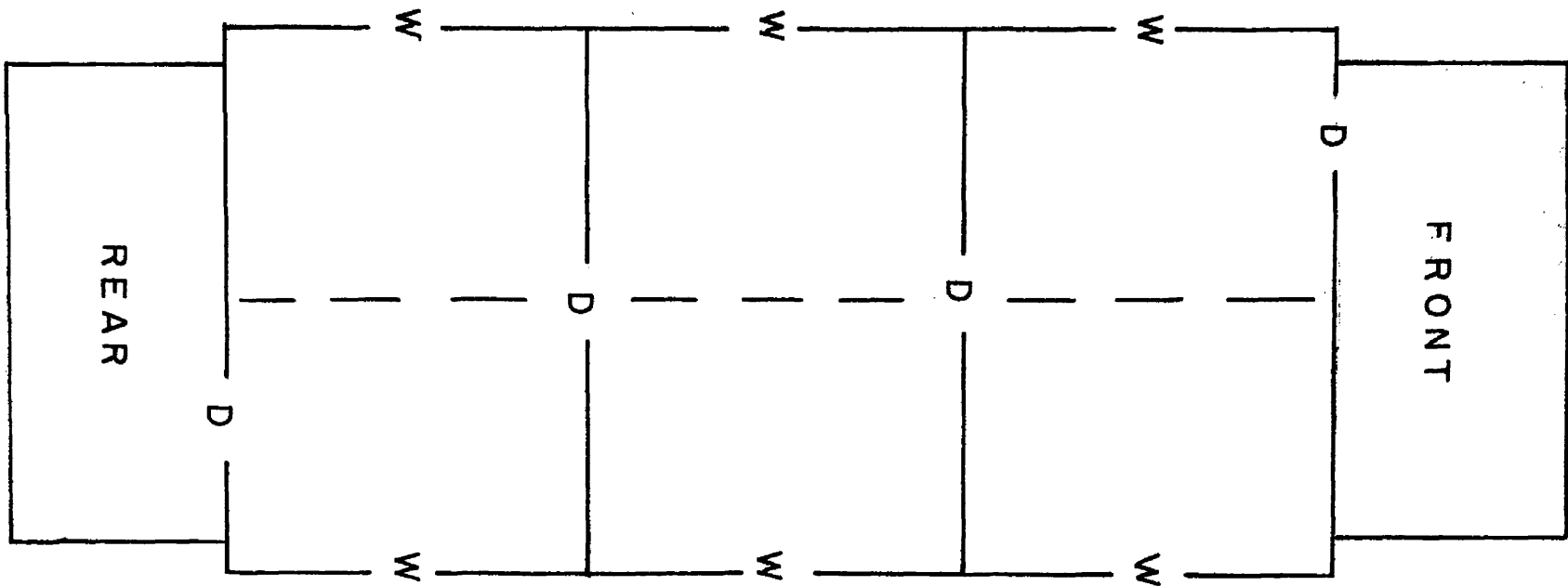




Company House Floor Plan

FISHER LOG-PEN

1" = 5'



Company House Floor Plan

FISHER SHOTGUN

1" = 5'



Figure 38: Fisher company office building.
Note brick vault at side.



Figure 39: Fisher commissary.



Figure 40: Fisher theater.



Figure 41: Fisher Masonic lodge, now used as a storeroom.



Figure 42: Fisher boarding house.



Figure 43: Fisher boarding house.



Figure 44: Fisher church (white).



Figure 45: Fisher church (Negro).



Figure 46: Fisher company house. Log-pen type, older board-and-batten construction.



Figure 47: Fisher company house. Log-pen type, improved version of house in Figure 46.



Figure 48: Fisher company house, single log-pen type (Negro).



Figure 49: Fisher company house, shotgun type (Negro).



Figure 50: Fisher school (white).



Figure 51: Fisher mill. Pond and dam in foreground.



Figure 52: Locomotive at Fisher mill. Wood-burning rod engine still in service.

FULLERTON

Fullerton, Vernon Parish, was established by the Gulf Lumber Company in 1906, and cut out in 1927.¹ Evidently the mill was extremely large. Boyd describes it as the "largest mill west of the Mississippi," and states that it had three double-cutting band mills, two timber-cutting band mills, and an eight-foot horizontal re-saw. It was built entirely of steel and concrete, and had an annual capacity of about 120 million board feet.²

Ford³ gives the mill an output of 250,000 board feet per day, and recounts that when the mill was running day and night, the logs from forty acres of virgin long-leaf were required to keep it going for a single twenty-four hour period. Also included in the establishment were a distillery, which manufactured grain alcohol from slabs and refuse, a planer mill, machine shop, dry kilns, lumber yard, and mill pond.

Such a large plant attracted a sizable population. By 1920 Fullerton was incorporated and had 2,412 inhabitants, just a few less than Leesville, largest town in the parish. However, only 148 people remained in 1930.

¹Boyd, op. cit., p. 28.

²Ibid.

³Curry Ford, "Bankers Talk, Practice Forestry," Forests and People, II (1952), 25.

Those who lived in Fullerton described it as "the best sawmill town in the country." Accounts indicate that they enjoyed a combination of facilities unusual even among the more notable settlements of this type.

Standpipes were located in Negro and white residential areas, providing water for all dwellings. Generators at the mill furnished electricity to all quarters. Ice was brought in by rail, and stored at an ice house near the depot. The company employed two quarter-bosses, and provided a hospital with doctors and nursing service.

The commissary deserves special mention. The ruins of this one-story building are still impressive. It had concrete floors and walls, and measured about 90 by 120 feet. The building also housed the barber shop and other small enterprises.

A branch bank was established in Fullerton by the First State Bank of Leesville.⁴ There was also a drug store, a cafe, a theater, and a post office. Boarding houses were operated for both white and colored, the former known as the "Hotel de Pines."

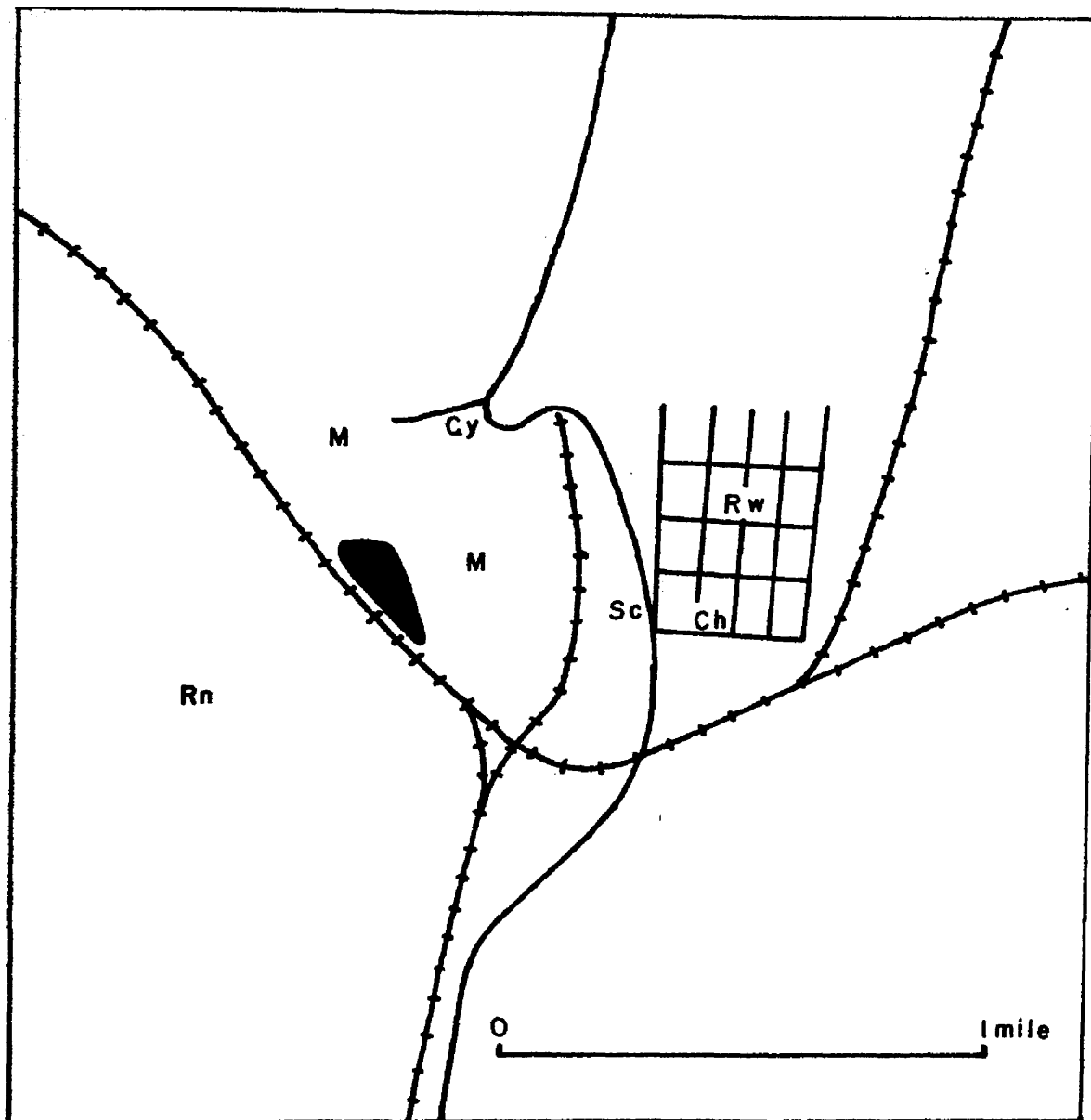
The town had two churches, for whites and Negroes, each with its own cemetery. Similarly, schools were provided for both races, classes for white children extending through the high school grades.

Houses in Fullerton included pyramidal and shotgun

⁴Ibid.

types. Families of white workers occupied pyramidal houses which seem to have been unusually well made and comfortable. None was seen at the site, and they are described here at second hand. In general, they were similar to the Negro residence shown in the accompanying photograph, but somewhat larger. They were painted various colors, usually white, and in some cases boasted indoor plumbing installed by the company. Houses for men in supervisory positions were very large, some having as many as thirteen rooms, and renting for as much as forty dollars a month.

Negro homes included both pyramidal and shotgun house types, but the latter were never numerous. Only a few were built at the outset of operations, and were later replaced by pyramidal dwellings of the type illustrated.



Ch-CHURCH

Cy-COMMISSARY

M- MILL

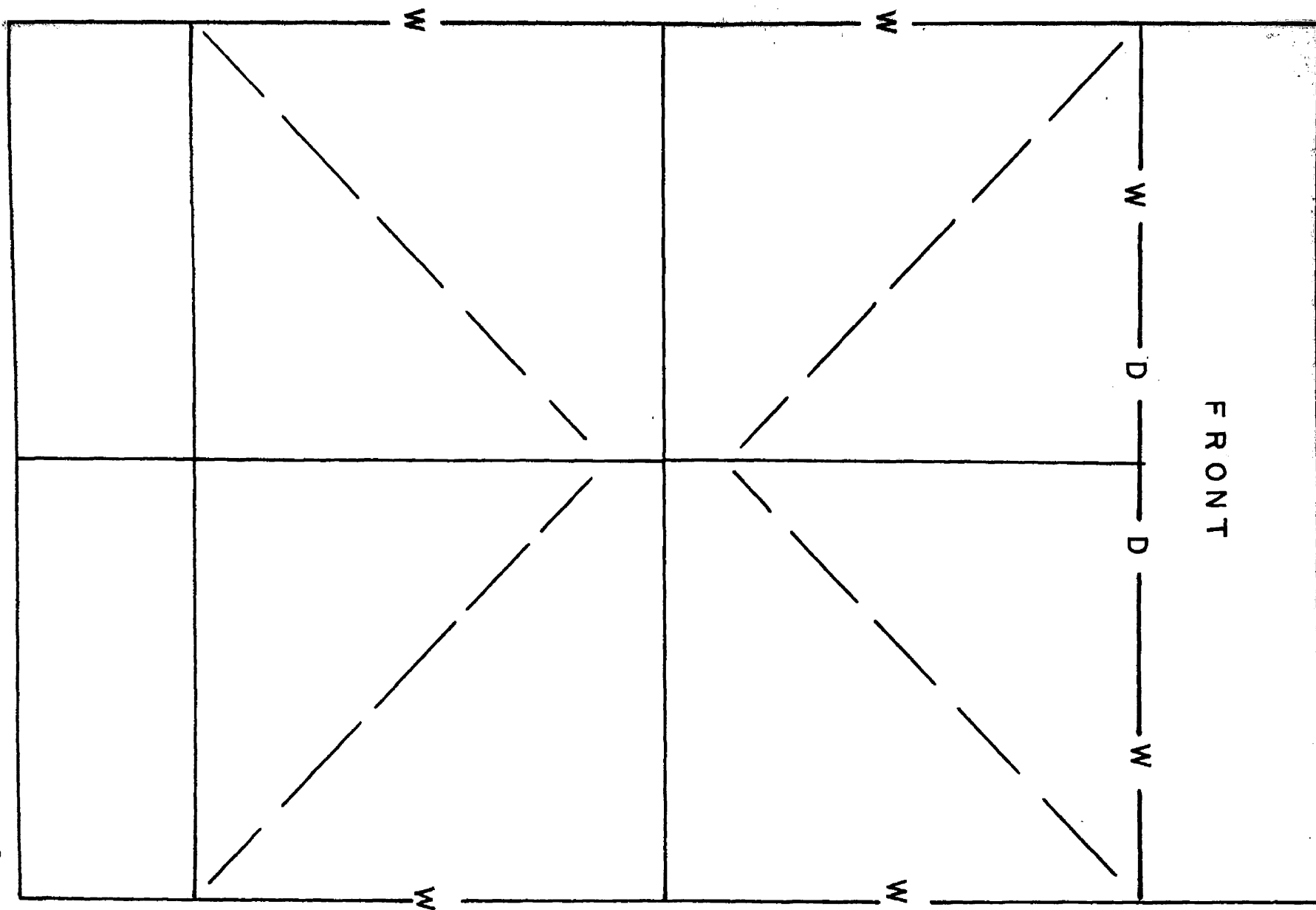
Rw-RESIDENTIAL, WHITE

Rn-RESIDENTIAL, NEGRO

Sc-SCHOOL

FULLERTON

Vernon Parish, La.



Company House Floor Plan
FULLERTON PYRAMIDAL

1" = 5'



Figure 53: Fullerton company house, pyramidal type (Negro).



Figure 54: View of Fullerton business district.



Figure 55: Fullerton commissary.



Figure 56: Fullerton commissary, interior view.

GANDY

In 1917 the Wyatt Lumber Company established Gandy, about ten miles south of Many on the Kansas City Southern Railway. By this time much of the longleaf pine timber in the area had been cut, a hardwood mill was installed in addition to the pine mill. Timber was brought in from lands to the west, camps being established at Esto, Negreet, and Bowie. Also at the Gandy mill there was a machine shop, standpipe, lumber yard, and mill pond.

Near the mill the company built a barn and small corral, or "stomp lot," where four mules used at the mill were kept. Big corrals were maintained at the camps for mules used at the front. Steam skidders were not used here, and the transition in log-handling methods was directly from animal to truck.

Gandy was not large, and in 1930 it was said to have a population of some 350 persons, but in all probability this is somewhat below the number of inhabitants in the town at its maximum size some years earlier.

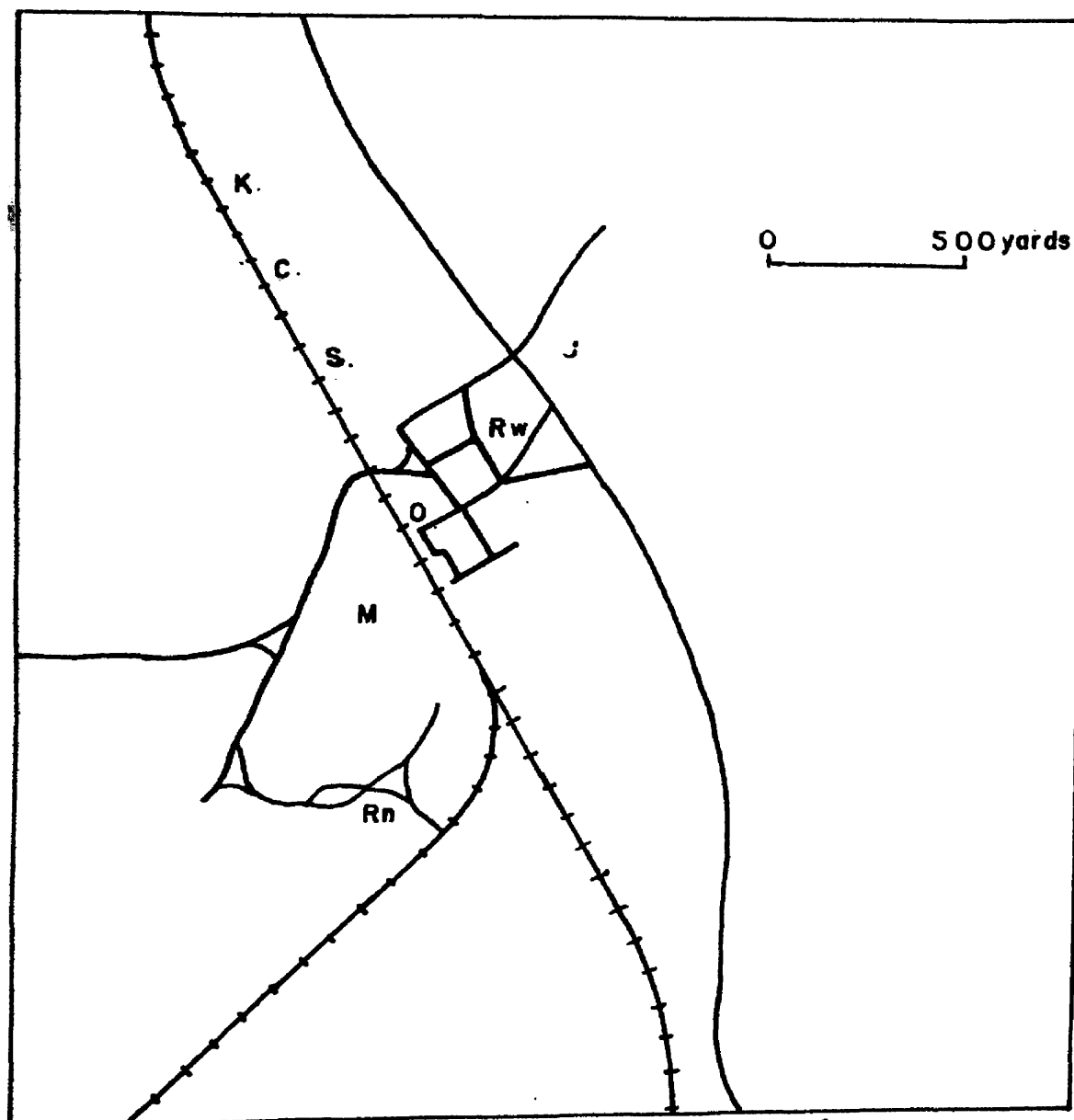
Boarding houses were provided for white and Negro workers, and schools for the children of both races. A church was built for white residents in their section of the town, while services for Negroes were held in their school building.

Within the town there were the usual mill offices,

commissary, post office, and barber shop. A pressing shop was also open for a number of years. Generators at the mill provided electricity for the town, but water had to be taken from dug wells in the yard of each house. Some of these wells, about two feet in diameter and lined with cement, are still open. Ice was brought in by rail and stored in an ice house at the commissary.

The Gandy population included white, Negro, and Mexican elements. The latter were never numerous, estimates averaging about one hundred, and for the most part they were employed only at heavier manual tasks.

Company houses remaining in Gandy, particularly those built for white families, are large and well-built pyramidal structures, a number of them still being occupied. In some cases alterations have been made, taking the form of additions to the rear of the houses or the enclosure of porches. The houses in the white section of the town were ordinarily painted a buff or cream color. The homes seen in the Gandy Negro quarter are of the single log-pen type, unpainted, sturdy and well-built.



M-MILL

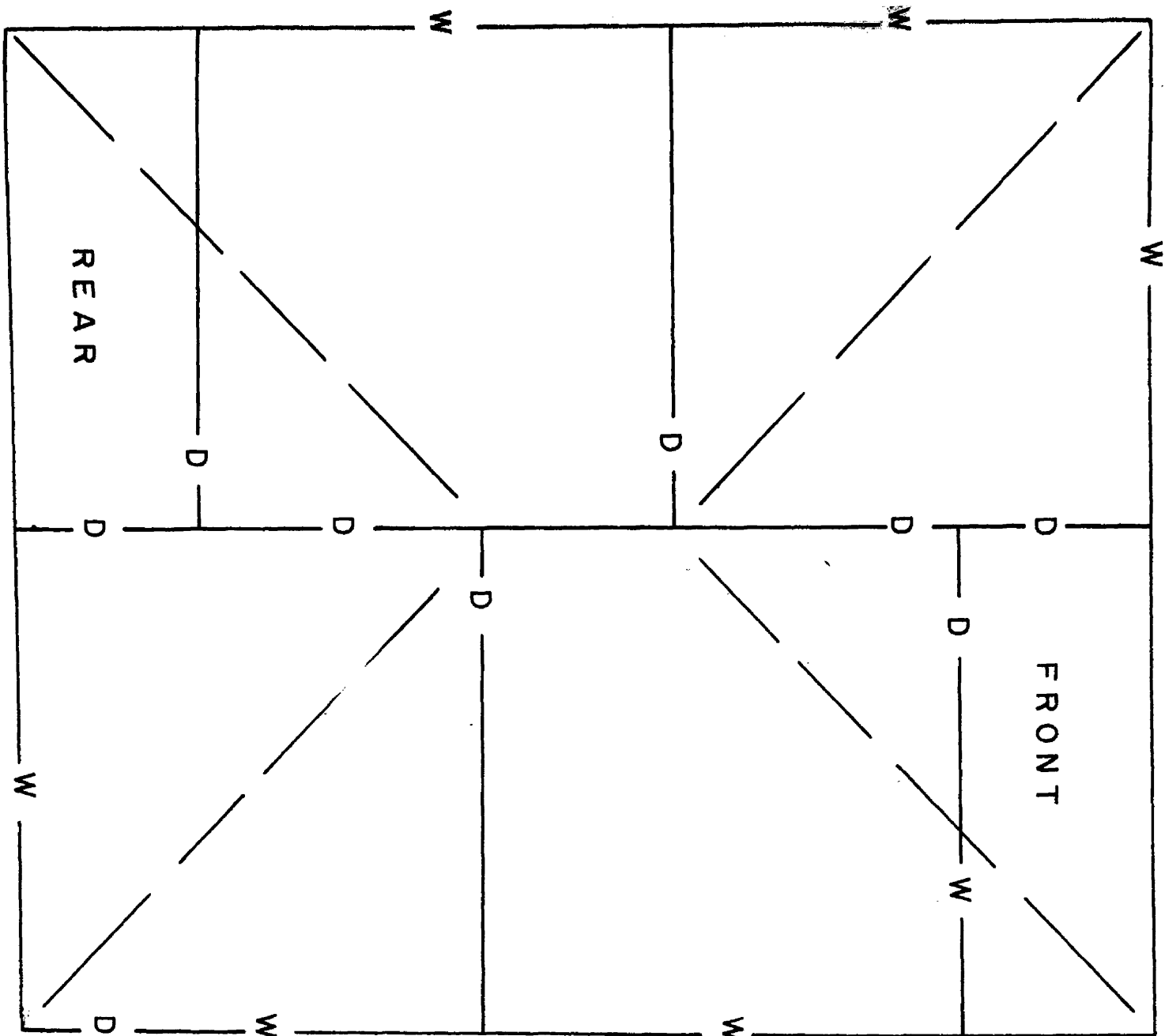
O-OFFICE

Rw-RESIDENTIAL, WHITE

Rn-RESIDENTIAL, NEGRO

GANDY

Sabine Parish, La.



Company House Floor Plan
GANDY PYRAMIDAL
1" = 5'



**Figure 57: Gandy company house, pyramidal type.
Room added at rear.**



**Figure 58: Gandy company house, pyramidal type.
Original porch enclosed, new attached
porch added.**



Figure 59: Gandy company house, log-pen type.



Figure 60: Gandy company house. Originally a "sleeping shack" for Mexicans.

HAWTHORN

Hawthorn was one of the first sawmill towns to be built in Vernon Parish, and was located on the newly-built Kansas City Southern. Established in 1898, it represents a transition from the small local mills of the past to the large plants of the early twentieth century.

The mill was reportedly built by Mr. Joe Hawthorn, and later sold to George Strange of Missouri. About 1905 Strange moved the mill, possibly to Newlin, Beauregard Parish, and the Hawthorn site was abandoned.

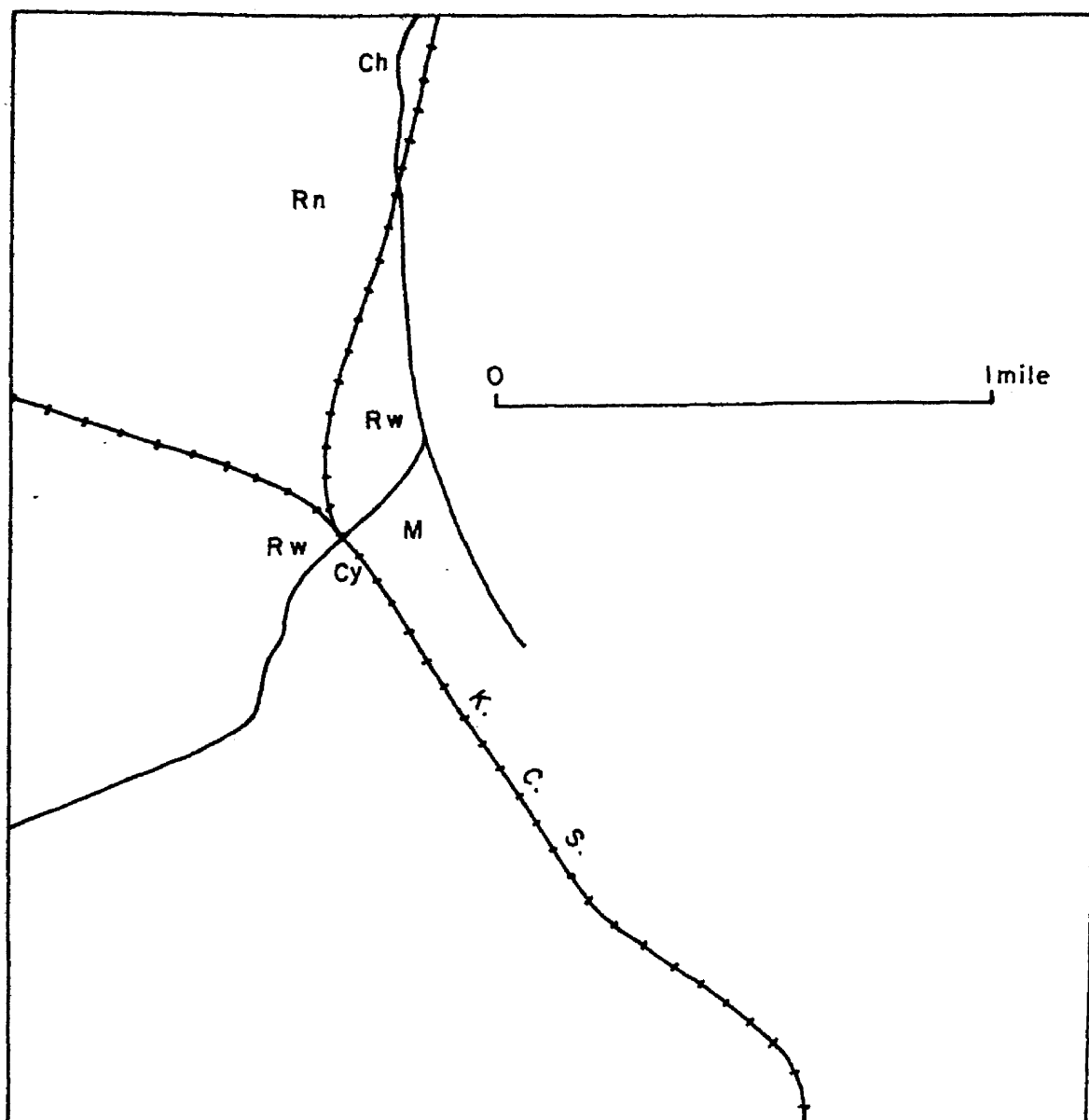
A small mill at best, the Hawthorn plant produced only rough pine lumber and hardwood logs. Other than the mill there was only a blacksmith shop, operated primarily for repairing wagons and shoeing horses. A mill pond was started, but the volume of logs remained so low that its completion was never justified. All logs were brought to the mill by contract haulers, using oxen.

A company store was operated in the little settlement, a boarding house for whites who worked in the office or held supervisory positions, and a two-story "sleeping quarter" for white mill hands. Mail was handed out at a small post office which was combined with the company store and office. The town had no electricity, and water was taken from dug wells, each serving four or five families.

Children of white families were sent to the old

Anacoco community school nearby, and the Anacoco church and Masonic lodge were attended by Hawthorn residents.

Informants describing Hawthorn were quite vague as to the nature of house types built within the settlement, calling them simply "box" houses. They seem to have been frame structures, one story high, with sideward facing gables, probably of the single log pen type. Actually there were few houses in the settlement, there being at the most only about twenty white families and perhaps an equal number of Negroes.



Ch-CHURCH

Cy-COMMISSARY

M-MILL

Rw-RESIDENTIAL, WHITE

Rn-RESIDENTIAL, NEGRO

HAWTHORN

Vernon Parish, La.



Figure 61: View of Hawthorn site.

KURTHWOOD

Kurthwood, northern Vernon Parish, was one of the smaller sawmill towns, with a total population of about 800, white and Negro. Established in 1919 by the Vernon Parish Lumber Company, the mill cut pine until October 18th, 1929. For a time thereafter the mill produced hardwood lumber. The site was not completely abandoned until about 1945, when the buildings were dismantled and removed.

The original plant included a pine mill, hardwood mill, planer mill, dry kilns, lumber yard, corral, barn, machine shop, and mill pond. Lights and water for the town were provided by generators and a standpipe at the mill. A turpentine still was operated about a mile to the west by another company.

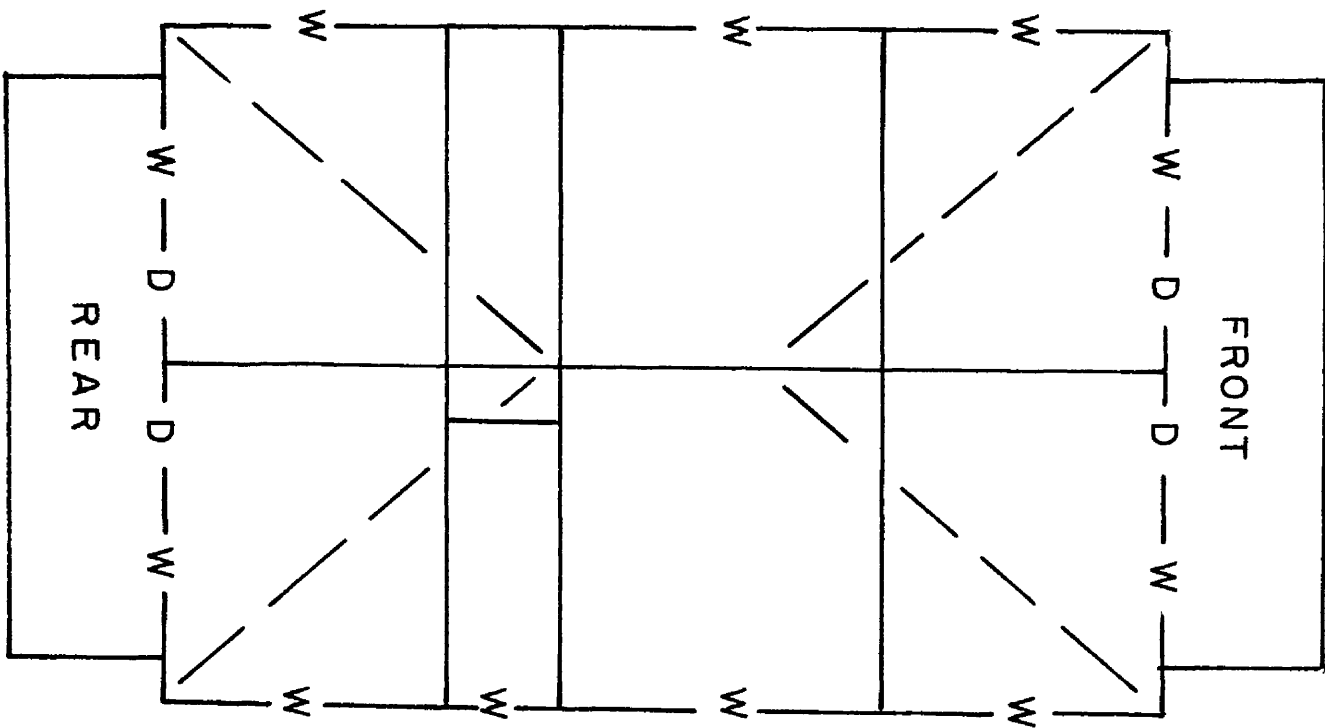
In the settlement's business district there were the company offices, commissary, ice house, a combined doctor's office and drug store, a barber shop, pressing shop, theater, and post office. Two boarding houses stood in this area, one for the unmarried white men who worked in the woods crew or in the mill, and another for the office force. A boarding house for Negroes was operated in their quarter, just southeast of the mill. Kurthwood schools offered instruction through the seventh grade. Children in higher grades were sent daily to Alco.

The company supported a semi-professional baseball

team, and further augmented recreational activities by constructing a concrete dam across a nearby creek, thus providing a swimming pool. Bands were hired and brought in for weekly dances held in a hall in town.

A single church building was used by white residents of all denominations, as was the custom in the Negro quarter. In the latter instance a cemetery was situated near the church.

In Kurthwood company houses were of two principal types: pyramidal, occupied by whites and Negroes, and shotgun, limited to families of the latter race.



Company House Floor Plan
KURTHWOOD PYRAMIDAL

1" = 10'



Figure 62: Kurthwood company house, pyramidal type.



Figure 63: Kurthwood company office building.



Figure 64: Kurthwood machine shop.



Figure 65: View of Kurthwood mill site.

LONGVILLE

In 1907 Longville was set up by the Long Bell Lumber Company in southeastern Beauregard Parish, on the Lake Charles and Northern Railroad, now the Texas and New Orleans. From that year until 1920 the mill cut only longleaf pine. Destroyed by fire in 1920, the mill was not rebuilt. The planer mill, only section not burned, was converted to the production of hardwood flooring, using timber brought in by rail. About 1927 the flooring mill was moved to De Ridder, and operations at the Longville site ceased entirely.

The mill assembly included a pine mill, planer mill, dry kilns, lumber yard, barn, corral, machine shop, and pond. At the mill were the generators and standpipe which furnished lights and water for the settlement. Horses used at the front were kept at the corral, and taken into the woods by train every morning. Only mules were used at the mill.

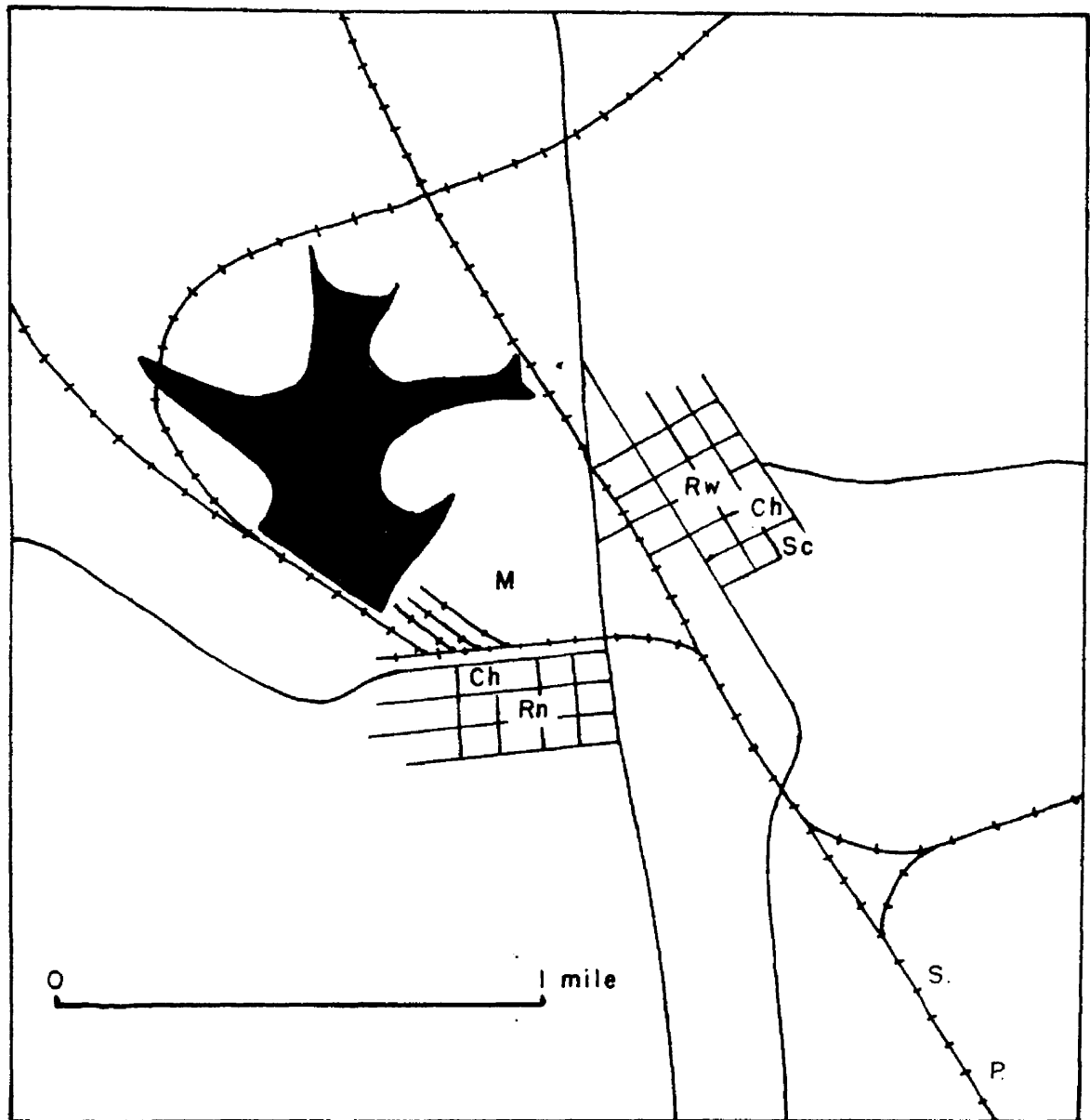
In the town were the company offices, the commissary, boarding houses for white and colored, churches for both races, a depot, doctor's office, drug store, barber shop, theater, and post office. An ice plant was operated by the company, contrary to the more common practice of bringing that item in by rail.

Also of special interest was the Longville bank, at present occupied as a residence. In addition, the town included a large hotel, a three-story frame building. Schools

in the settlement offered classes through the seventh grade for white and Negro children. A high school for whites was built about 1920. The town had no cemetery, and interments were generally made at De Ridder.

The population of Longville, according to former residents, numbered at the most about 2,500, a respectable figure for the time. Most of the men were hired by the quarter-boss, who recruited labor for all except the more responsible positions. A constable was elected by popular vote, and was responsible for order within the settlement.

Longville company houses included pyramidal, bungalow, and shotgun types. Pyramidal dwellings were provided for the majority of the white residents. When operations at Longville ceased, the better homes sold for about \$150.00. One informant related that he bought the mill foreman's home and the entire block on which it stood for \$250.00. Negro dwellings were of bungalow and shotgun varieties.



Ch-CHURCH

M-MILL

Rw-RESIDENTIAL, WHITE

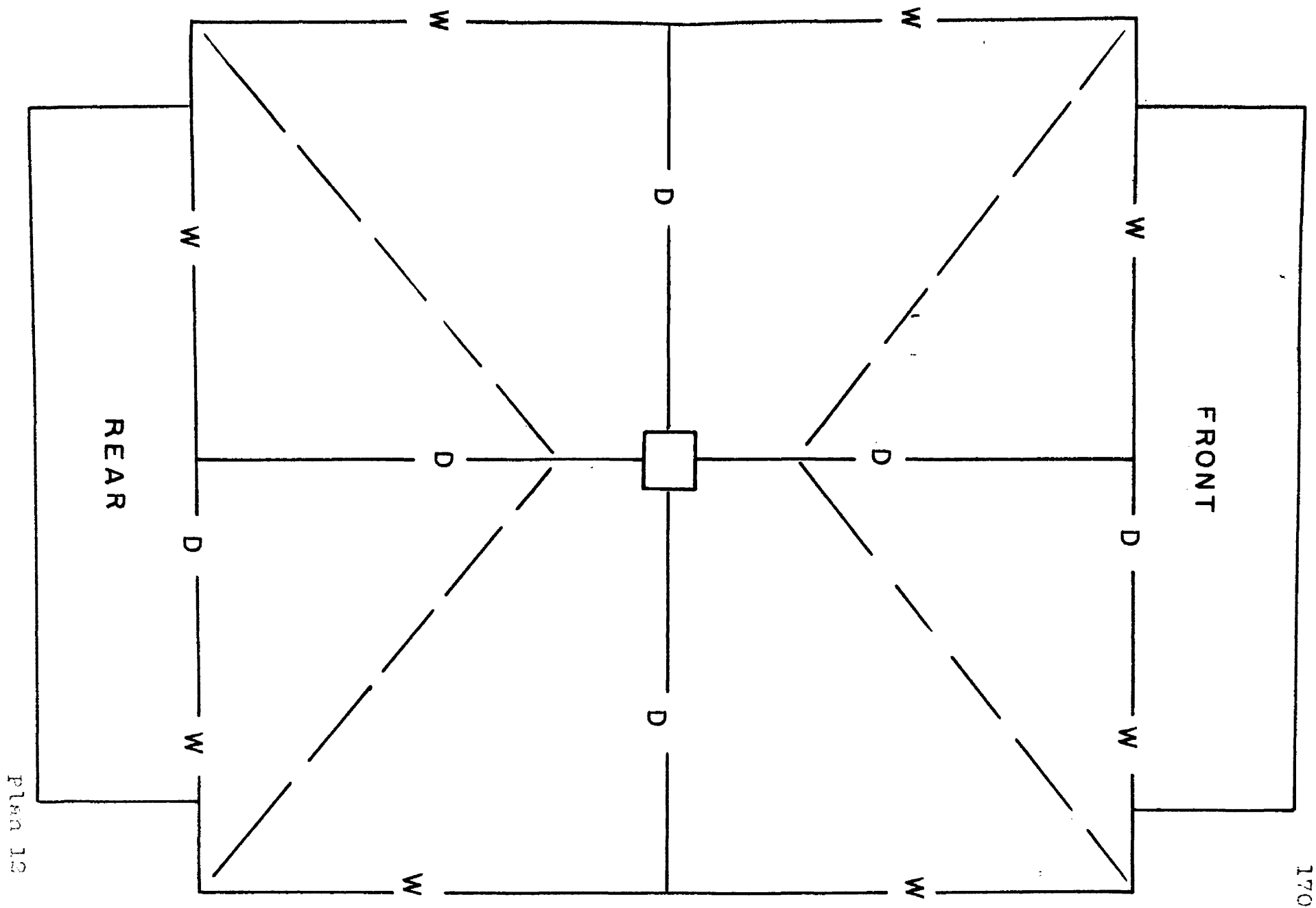
Rn-RESIDENTIAL, NEGRO

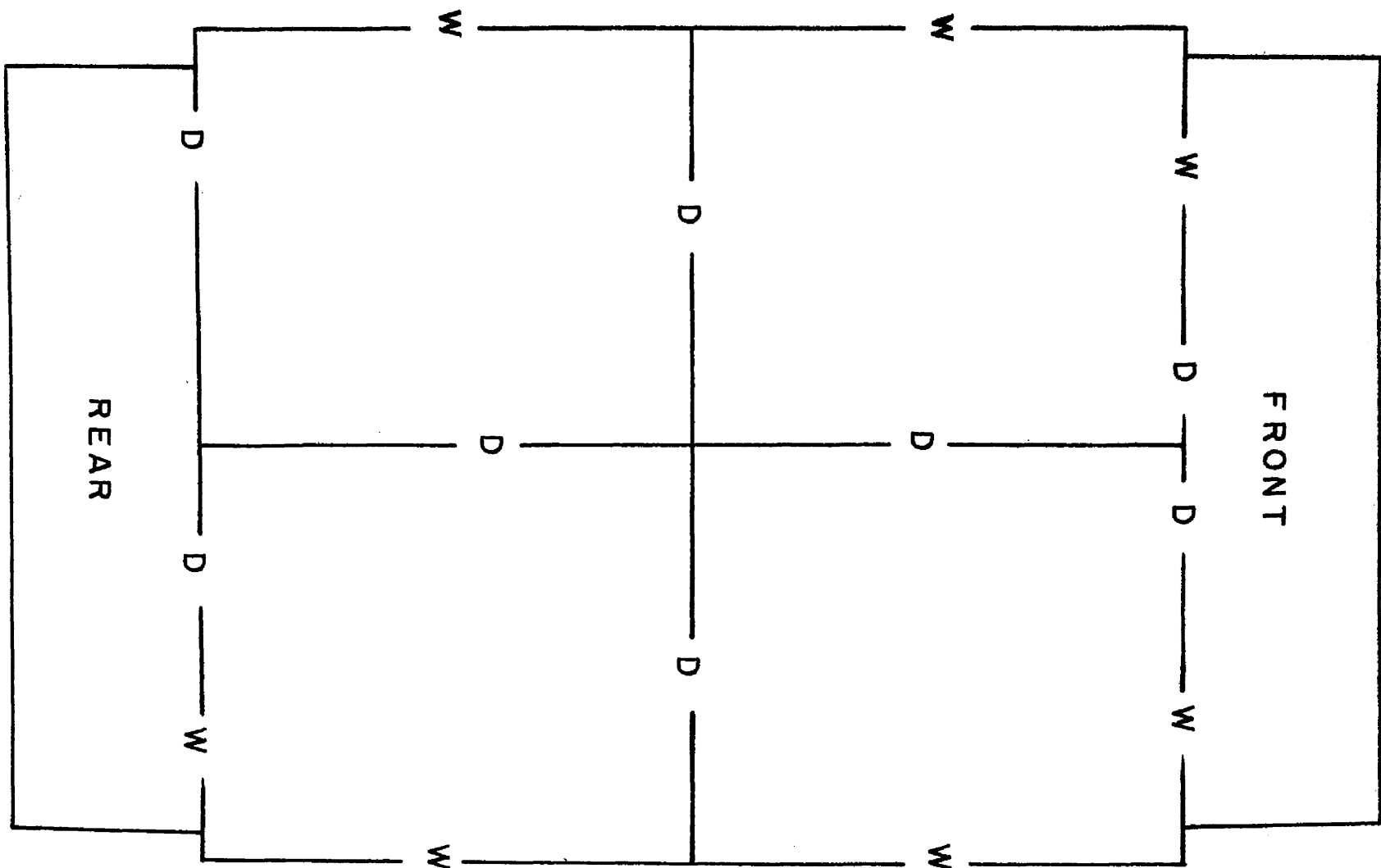
Sc-SCHOOL

LONGVILLE

Beaufort Parish, La.

Company House Floor Plan
LONGVILLE PYRAMIDAL
1" = 5'





Company House Floor Plan
LONGVILLE BUNGALOW

1" = 5'



Figure 66: Longville company house, pyramidal type.



Figure 67: Longville company house, bungalow type.



Figure 68: Longville bank.



Figure 69: View of Longville site.

LUDINGTON

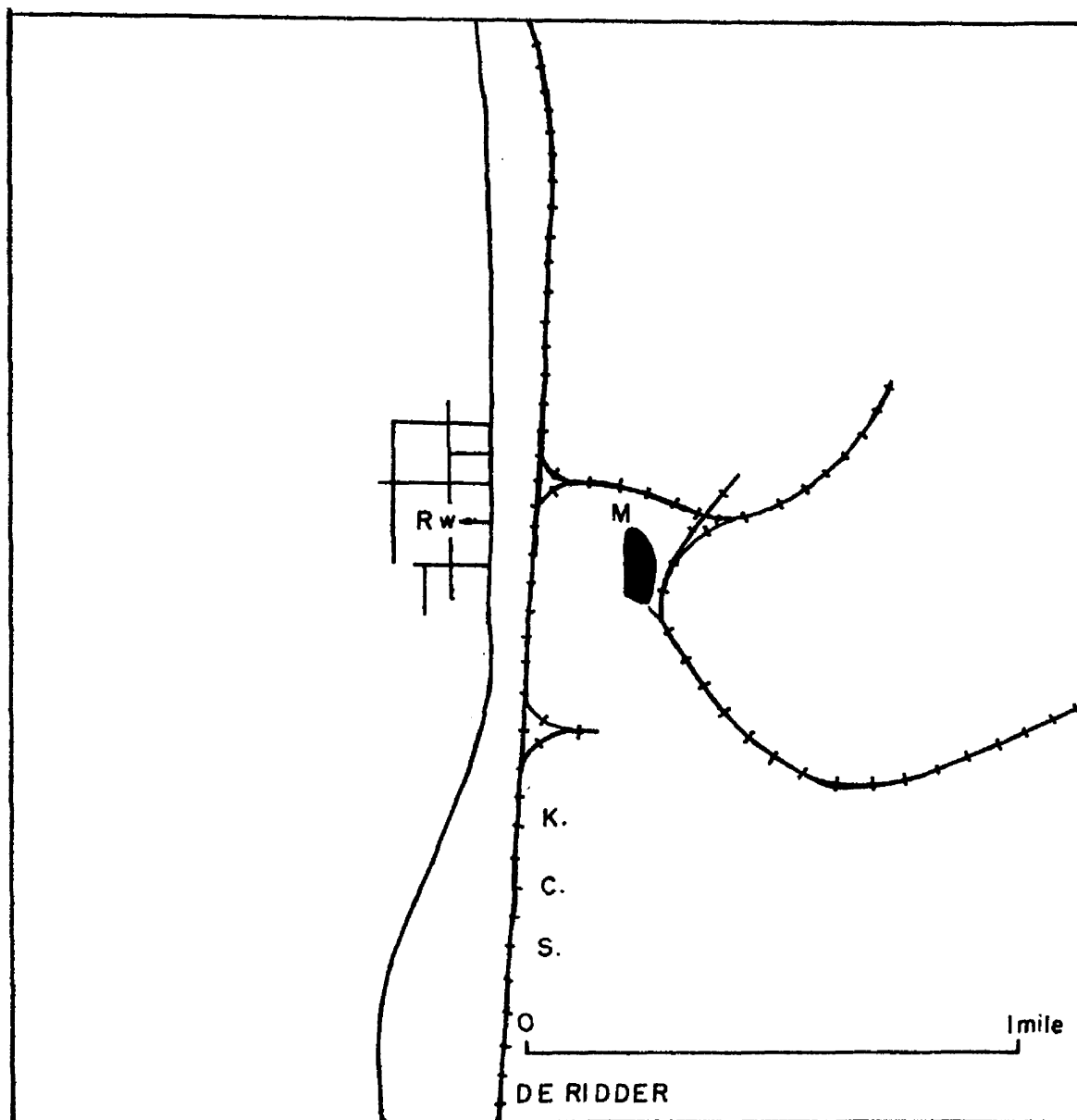
Ludington was built by the Ludington, Wells and Van Schaack Lumber Company, Ludington, Michigan. This concern founded the Beauregard Parish settlement in 1901, and in 1913 sold it to the Long Bell Lumber Company. Operation of the plant continued until 1926.

The Ludington mill, with an estimated capacity of 150,000 board feet per day, included a pine mill, planer mill, dry kilns, lumber yard, machine shop, barn and corral, and mill pond. The entire settlement received lights and water from generators and a standpipe located at the mill.

In the town were the company offices, commissary, boarding houses for white and colored, and schools. At the latter institutions classes were taught through the seventh grade. Further study was done at the De Ridder high school. Ludington also had a depot, a post office, barber shop, and doctor's office. Churches were built for both racial groups.

One former resident of Ludington stated that the first dial telephone system used publicly in the United States was installed in the mill and offices in 1913. This was apparently a model system built for research and experimentation, and after study was sold to the lumber company.

White families in Ludington lived in pyramidal houses, such as those illustrated here, while Negroes occupied two or four-room shotgun houses.

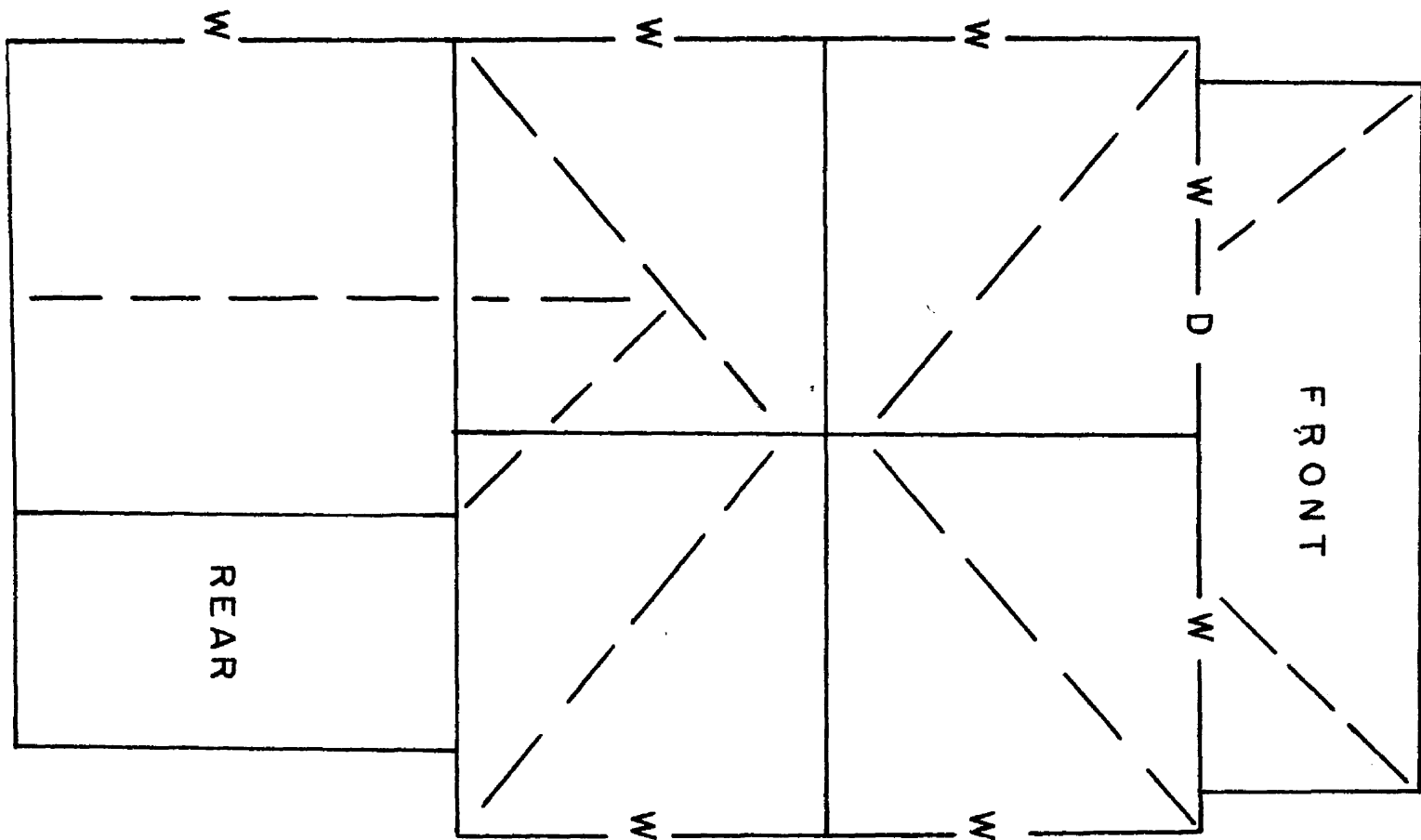


M - MILL

Rw - RESIDENTIAL, WHITE

LUDINGTON

Beauregard Parish, La.



Company House Floor Plan
 LUDINGTON PYRAMIDAL
 1" = 5'



Figure 70: Ludington company house, pyramidal type.



Figure 71: Ludington company house, pyramidal type.



Figure 72: View of Ludington mill site.



Figure 73: View of Ludington pond and dam.

McNARY

McNary was a sawmill town located immediately north of Glenmora in Rapides Parish. The exact year of its establishment by the W. M. Cady Lumber Company was not learned. Informants could say only "before 1914." McNary does not appear on the Kenyon map of 1910, but is shown on the National Map Company map of 1920. Operations at the site were said to have ceased about 1925.

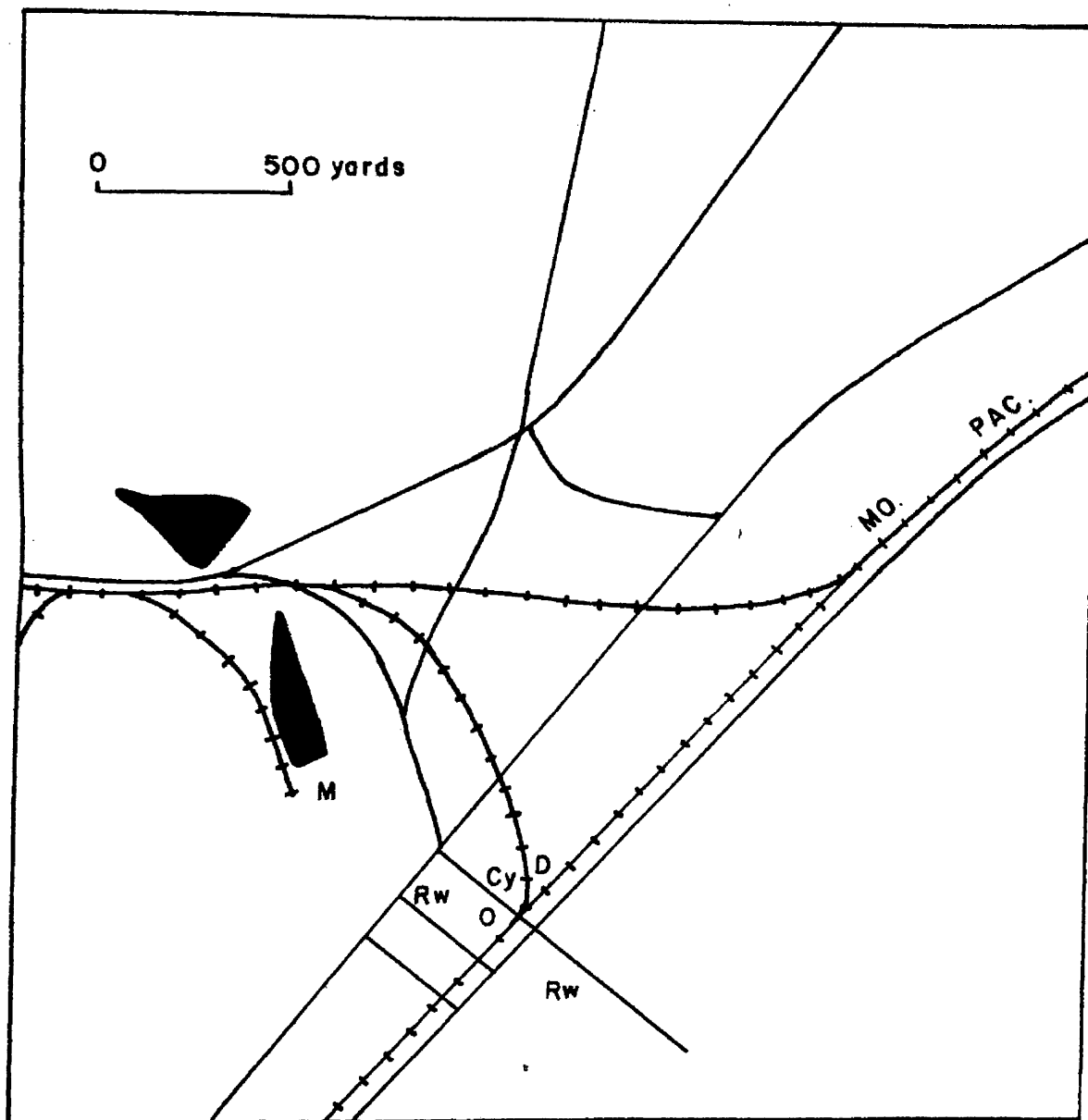
The plant, with a daily capacity of about 400,000 board feet, included a pine mill, planer mill, lumber yard, mill pond and reserve pond, and a machine shop. At the mill were generators which provided electricity for the town, and two or three standpipes furnished water for all quarters.

McNary children went to school in Glenmora, and white families attended church services there and buried their dead in the Glenmora cemetery. There were boarding houses for white and colored, a commissary, offices, an ice plant, and a depot. The company retained two physicians, maintaining for them a small hospital. Also in the town were a drug store, a barber shop, post office, and Negro church.

McNary was incorporated, and in 1920 had a population of 1,318. By 1930 this figure had dropped to 211. Some 500 more men, mostly Negroes, were employed in the woods, and lived at camps which were in reality small towns,

with water systems, commissaries, corrals, machine shops, and other facilities. The use of animals was generally limited to operations at the front. At the mill battery-powered tractors were used, later replaced by shortened Ford trucks.

McKary company houses were of two general types: pyramidal and shotgun. Of the pyramidal houses several were observed at the site, and are illustrated here. None of the original shotgun houses occupied by Negroes was seen.



Cy—COMMISSARY

D—DEPOT

M—MILL

Rw—RESIDENTIAL, WHITE

O—OFFICE

McNARY

Rapides Parish, La.

Plato XXXIII



Figure 74: McNary company house, pyramidal type.



Figure 75: McNary company house, pyramidal type.



Figure 76: McNary company official's residence.



Figure 77: View of McNary site.

PEASON

Peason, southeast Sabine Parish, was established in 1918 by the Peavy-Wilson Lumber Company, which continued operations there until 1934. The selection of a town site in this area was a problem, since surface water supplies were inadequate. Wells drilled in several locations produced salt water, the first fresh water found finally determining the town's site.

The mill plant included a pine mill, planer mill, dry kilns, lumber yard, machine shop, mill pond, and reserve pond. Nearby there was a twelve-acre corral, with barn, which housed mules used at the mill and in the woods. Generators and a water tank at the mill supplied the entire settlement with lights and water. Bathroom facilities in company houses were installed at the occupant's expense.

The commercial district included a barber shop, the company offices, and a post office. The commissary housed the offices of two company doctors and a drug store, in addition to its own large merchandising establishment. Also at hand was a theater, a boarding house for whites, an ice house, and a grammar school for white children. A small cafe, the "Blue Room," was operated in the boarding house.

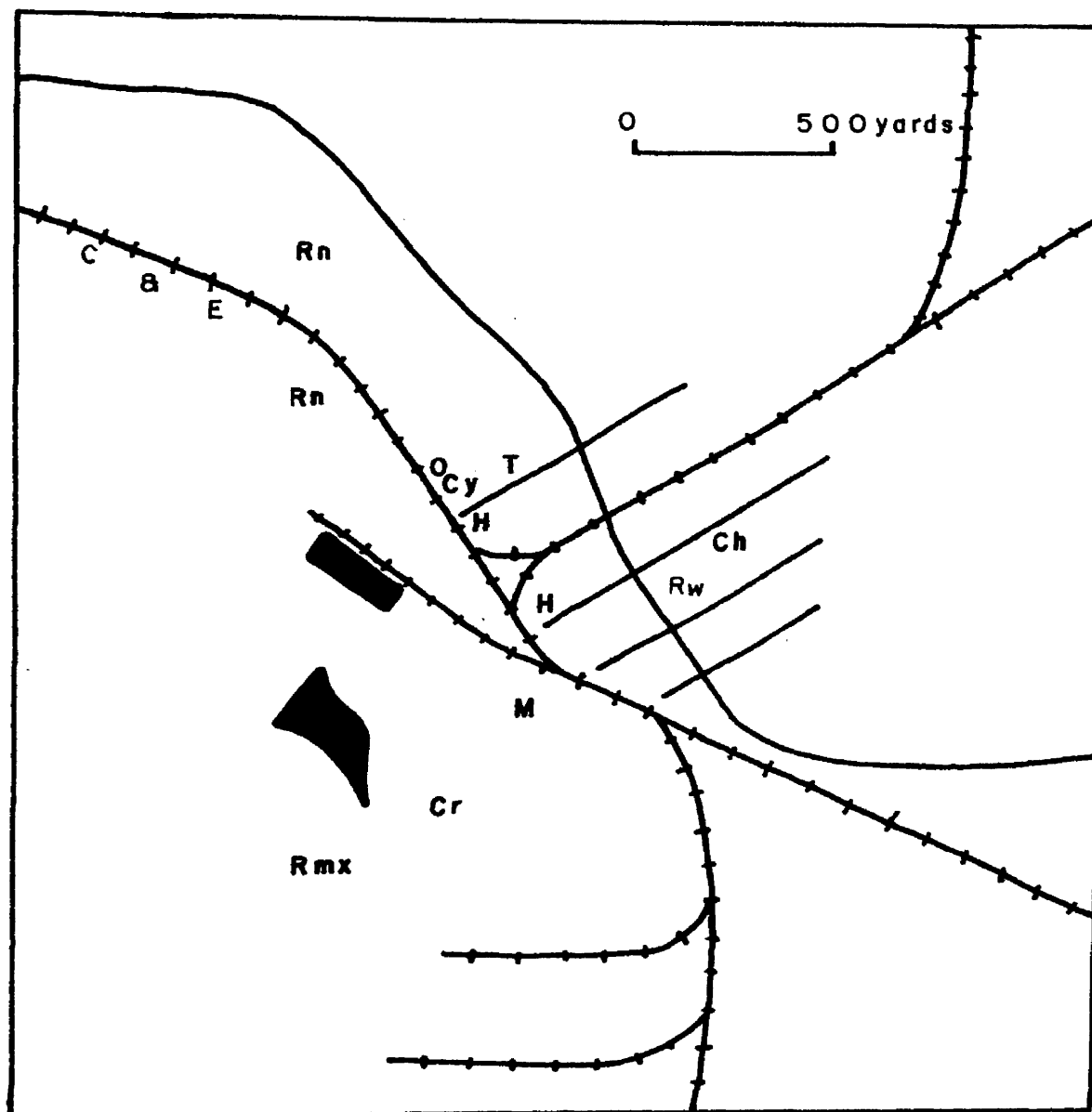
Churches were built in Peason for both racial groups, that of the whites being used by two denominations,

Baptist and Methodist. Morning and evening services were held by each group on alternate Sundays. Only the Negroes had a cemetery at Peason.

In its early days Peason included Mexican as well as white and Negro elements. The Mexicans numbered only one hundred or so, and lived in a separate quarter called "Mexico." They were employed during the construction of the mill and town, and were sent away soon afterward.

White families lived in pyramidal houses, locally called "red-tops," or "umbrella houses." Negroes and Mexicans occupied shotgun houses.

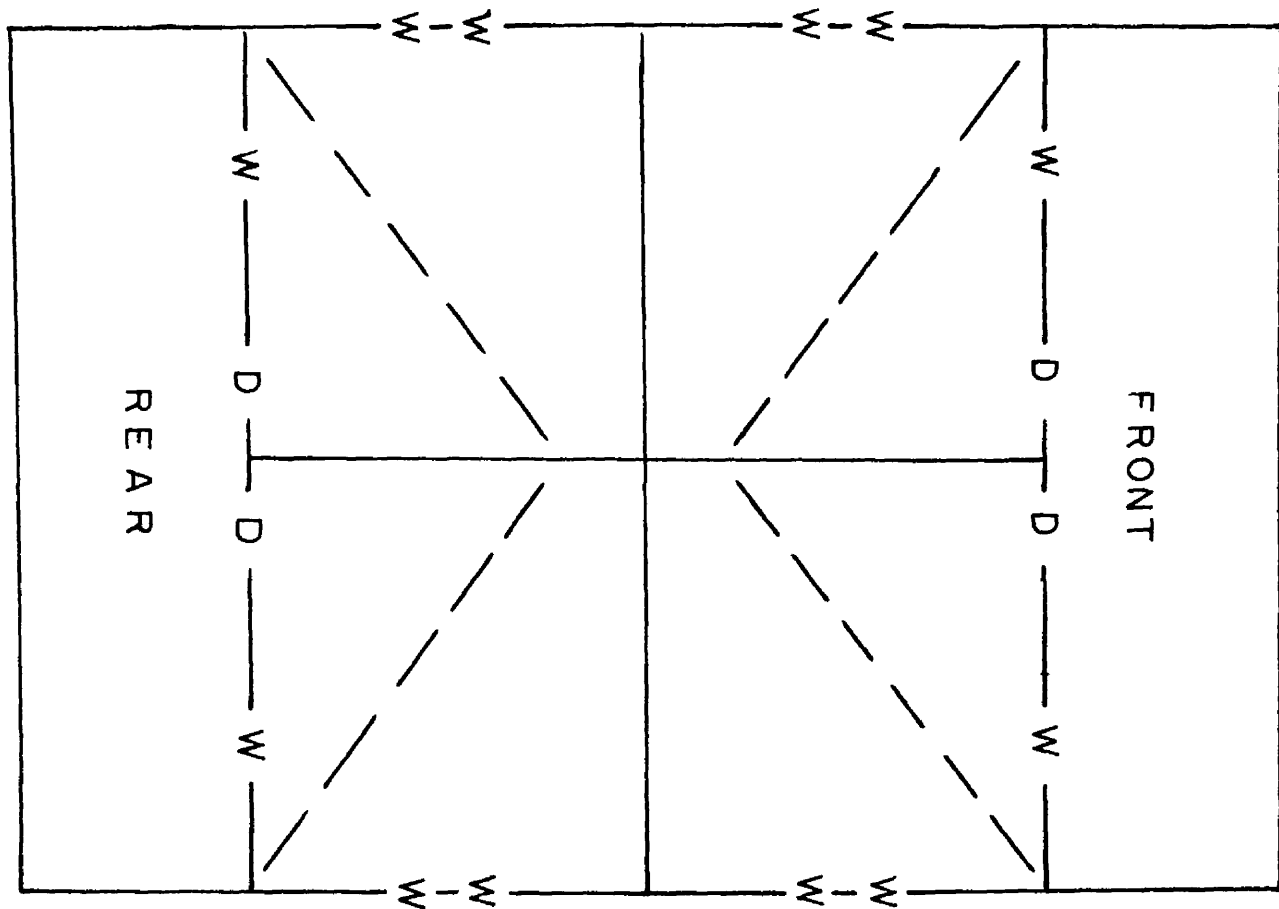
Loggers from Peason cut timber all the way to the Sabine River, first longleaf, then other pines. Steam skidders and oxen were used to bunch the logs, and shays moved them to the main spur lines. Trucks were first introduced at the Peason front about 1926--Model "T" Fords, with a single-wheeled trailer. According to the account of one of the first men to handle these machines, the truck could move only one log at a time, but could make forty trips a day, while an ox team made only three.



Ch- CHURCH
Cr- CORRAL
Cy- COMMISSARY
H-HOTEL
M- MILL
O-OFFICE
Rw- RESIDENTIAL, WHITE
Rn- RESIDENTIAL, NEGRO
Rm-RESIDENTIAL, MEXICAN

PEASON

Sabine Parish, La.



Company House Floor Plan

PEASON PYRAMIDAL

1" = 5'



Figure 78: Peason company house, pyramidal type.



Figure 79: Peason church.

PICKERING

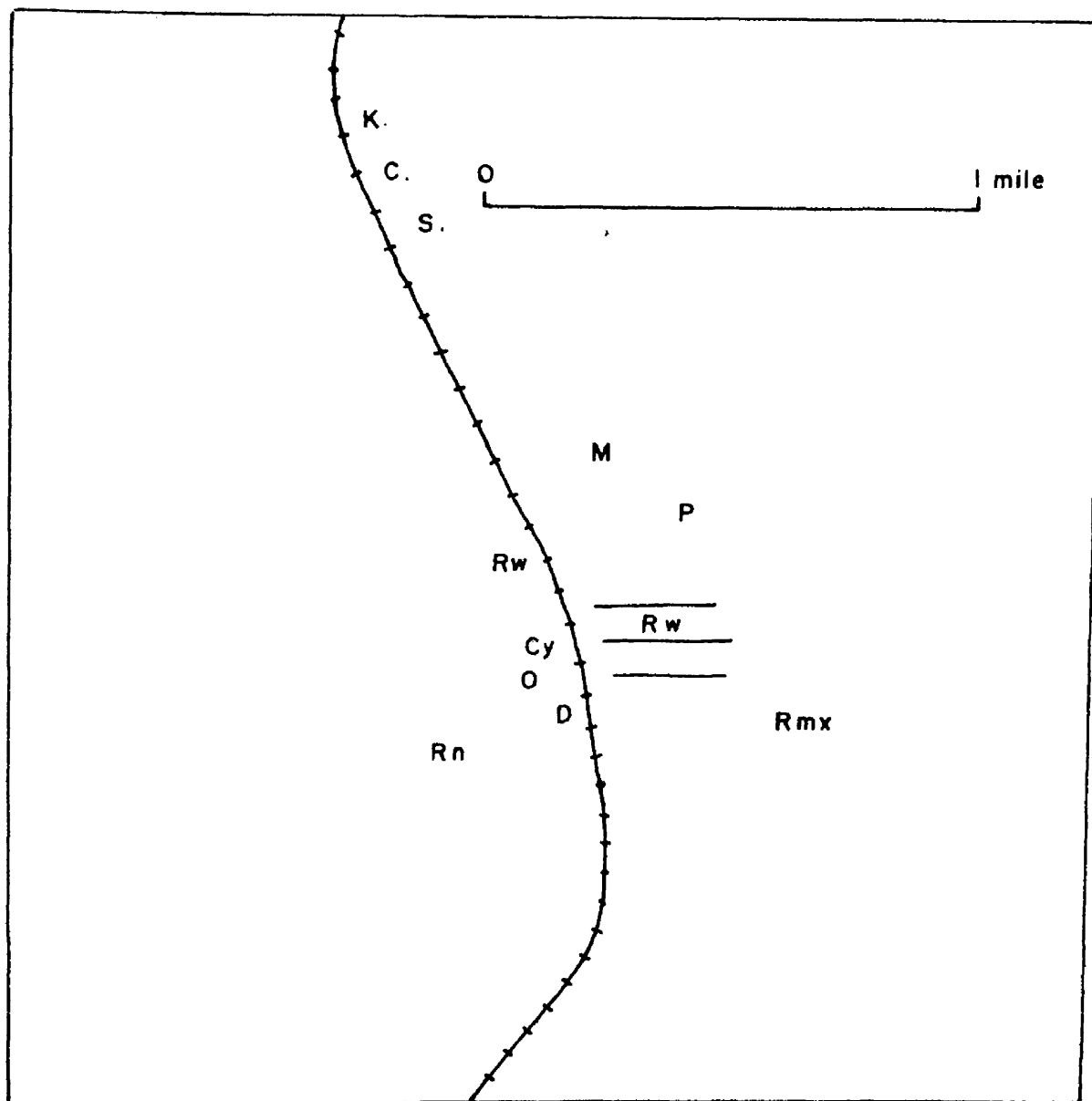
The W. R. Pickering Lumber Company built Pickering about 1900, and operated a sawmill there until it was destroyed by fire in 1925. The plant was not rebuilt, and the settlement was shortly thereafter abandoned.

The mill included pine and planer mills, dry kilns, a lumber yard, machine shop, corral, barn, and mill pond. Generators at the mill furnished electricity for the town, but water in residential areas was obtained from dug wells, usually arranged so that a single well could supply two homes.

A boarding house was built for white workers, and another for colored. The same duplication of construction prevailed with regard to schools and churches. There were also the company offices, the commissary, the depot, and the post office. Beyond these components, the settlement boasted only a barber shop, doctor's office, and ice house.

The people of Pickering were, for the most part, natives of the area, but some were brought from Missouri by the company. A small number of Mexicans were employed for a time as track maintenance workers.

The log-pen house was apparently the most common in Pickering, being occupied by both white and Negro families. A few pyramidal houses seem to have been built, but were definitely in the minority.



Cy- COMMISSARY

D- DEPOT

M- MILL

P- POND

Rw- RESIDENTIAL, WHITE

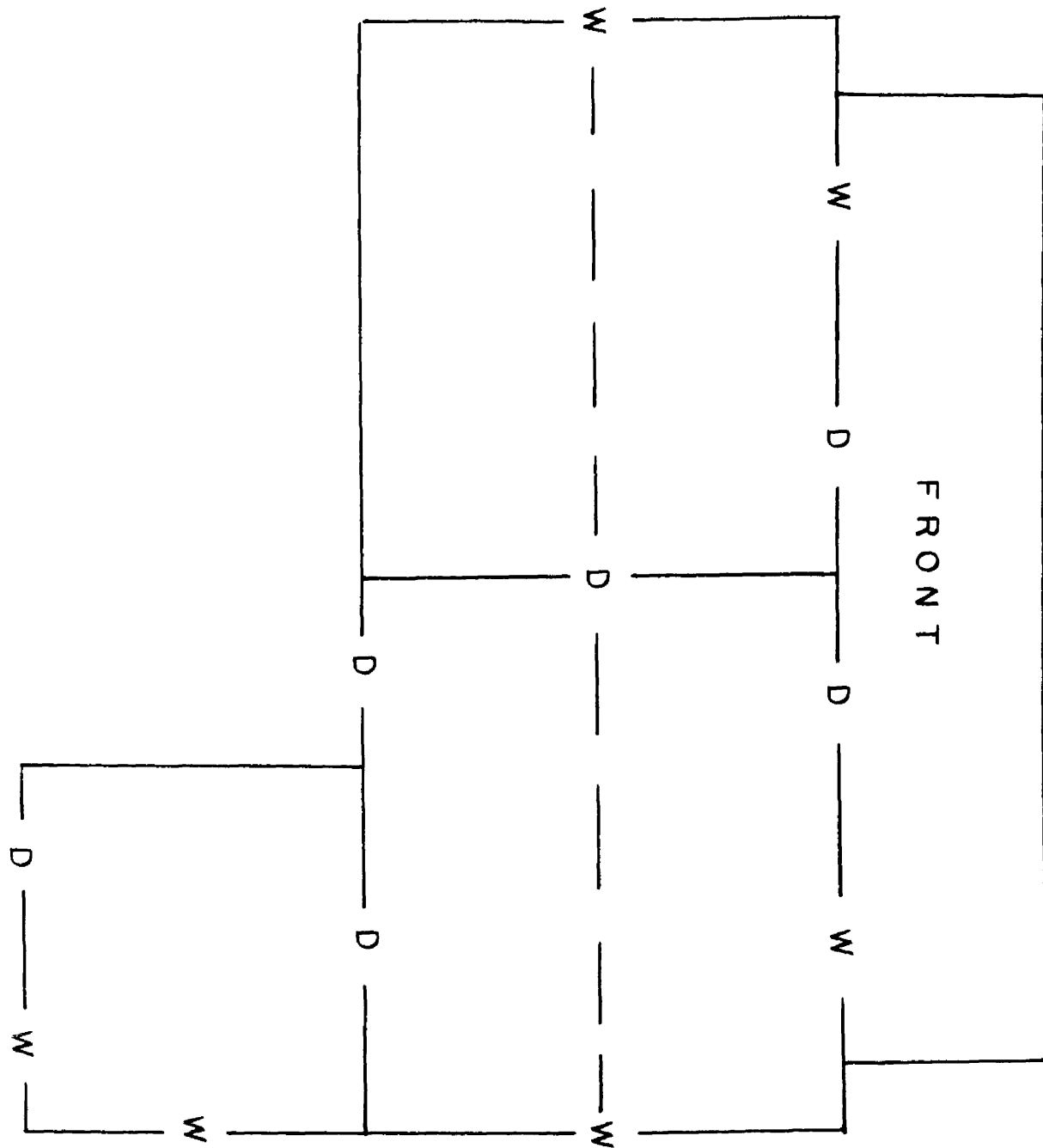
Rn- RESIDENTIAL, NEGRO

Rmx- RESIDENTIAL, MEXICAN

PICKERING

Vernon Parish, La.

Plate XXXV



Company House Floor Plan
PICKERING LOG-PEN



Figure 80: Pickering company house, log-pen type.



Figure 81: Pickering dam, showing concrete spillway.

SLAGLE

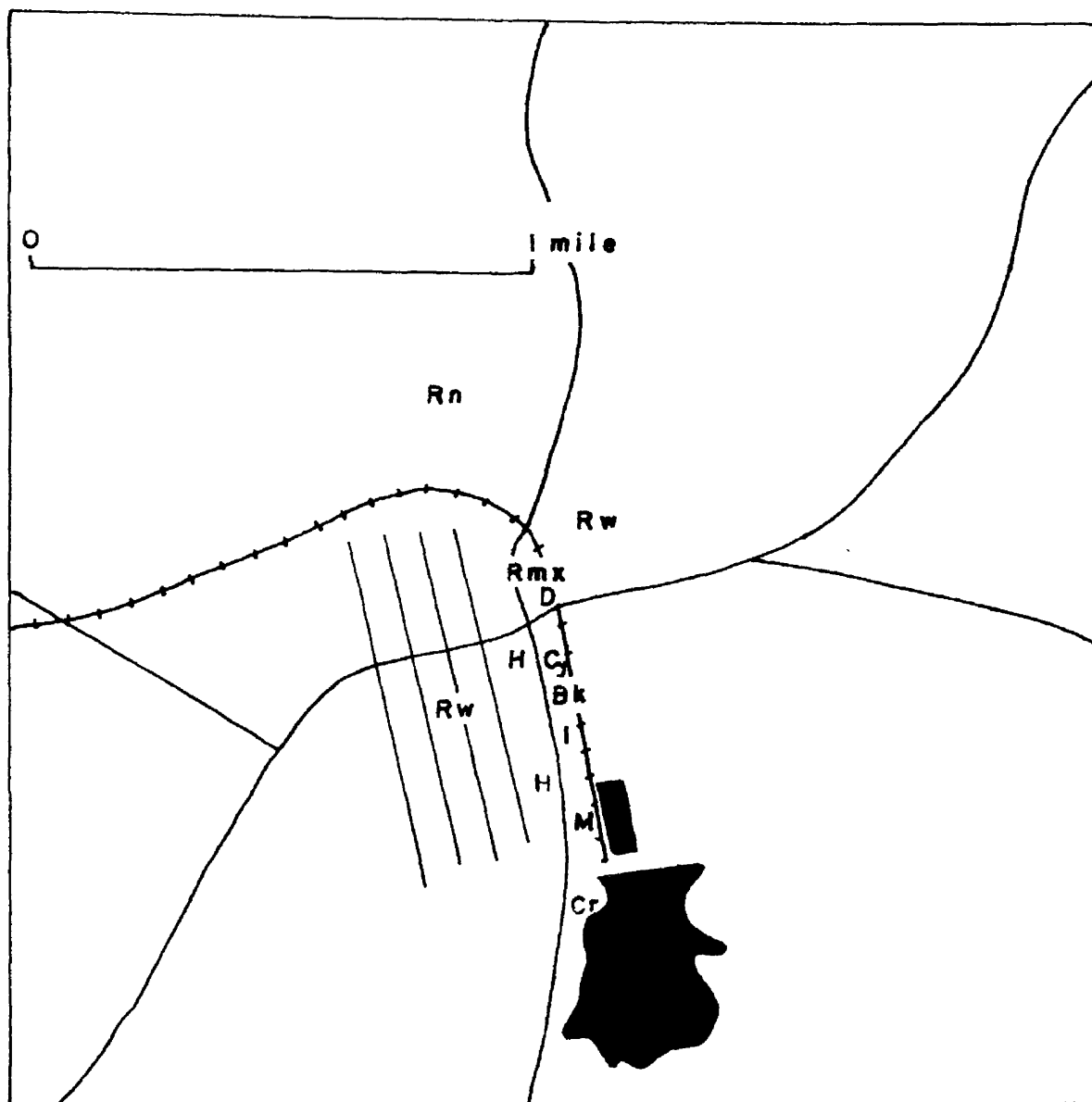
Slagle, Vernon Parish, was built in 1919 by the White and Grandin Lumber Company. Reports give the mill an annual capacity of some fifty million board feet, and at the time the mill cut out, in 1930, the town had a population of about 1,500. Many of these people were brought to Louisiana by the company, having originally been employed in Missouri.

The mill included a pine mill, planer mill, dry kilns, lumber yard, barn, corral, mill pond, reserve pond, and machine shop. Lights and water were furnished for the town by generators and a standpipe at the mill.

Business establishments in the settlement included a boarding house and hotel for whites, and a boarding house for Negroes. There was a commissary, which housed a drug department, the company offices, doctor's office, barber shop, theater, and bank.

Schools were maintained for both races, as were churches, and the Negro and Mexican population had a cemetery. About fifty Mexicans lived at Slagle, employed as track workers.

House types were generally restricted to pyramidal, for white families, and shotgun, for Negroes and Mexicans.



Bk-BANK

Cy-COMMISSARY

Cr-CORRAL

D-DEPOT

H-HOTEL

I-ICE PLANT

M-MILL

R-RESIDENTIAL, WHITE

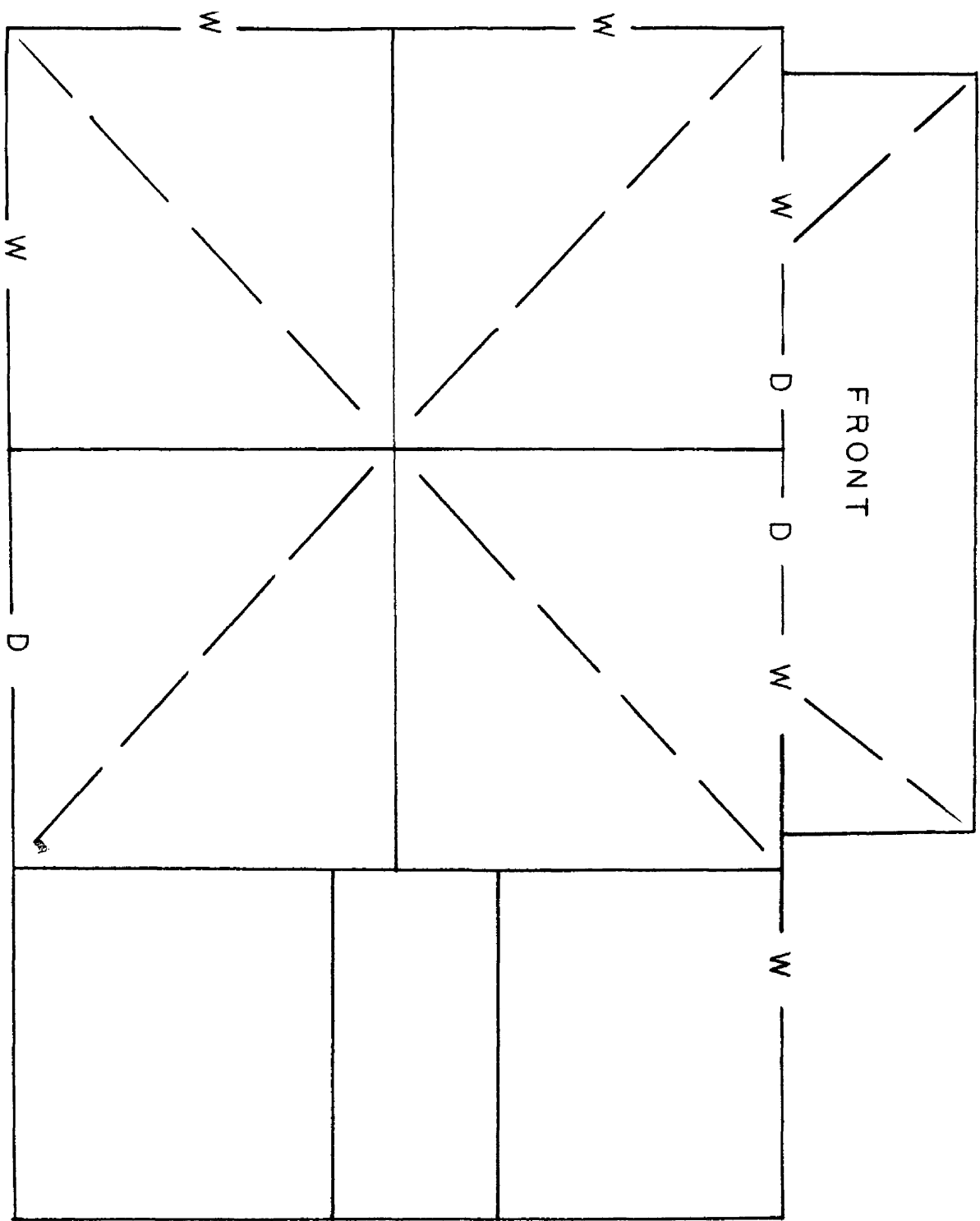
Rn-RESIDENTIAL, NEGRO

Rmx-RESIDENTIAL, MEXICAN

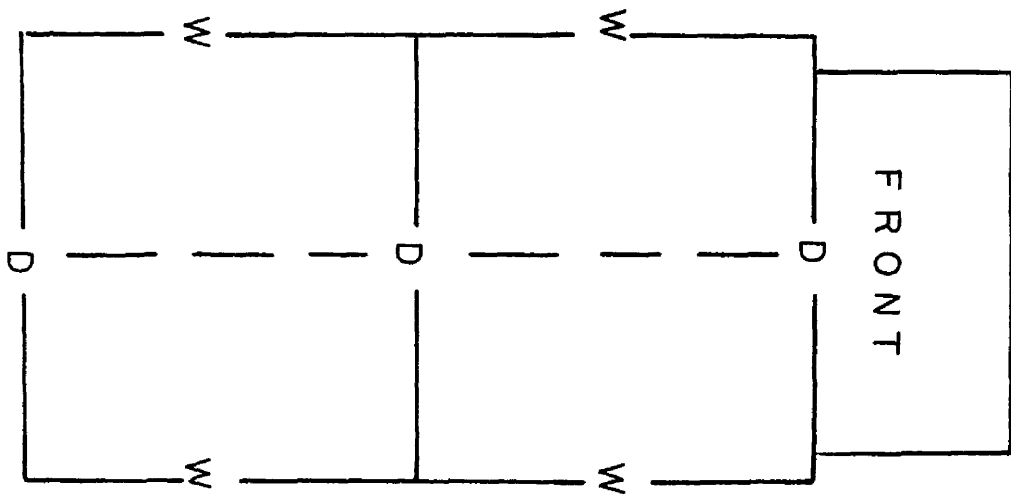
SLAGLE

Vernon Parish, La.

Plate XXXVI



Company House Floor Plan



Company House Floor Plan

SLAGLE SHOTGUN



Figure 82: Slagle company house, pyramidal type.



Figure 83: Slagle company houses, shotgun type.

VICTORIA

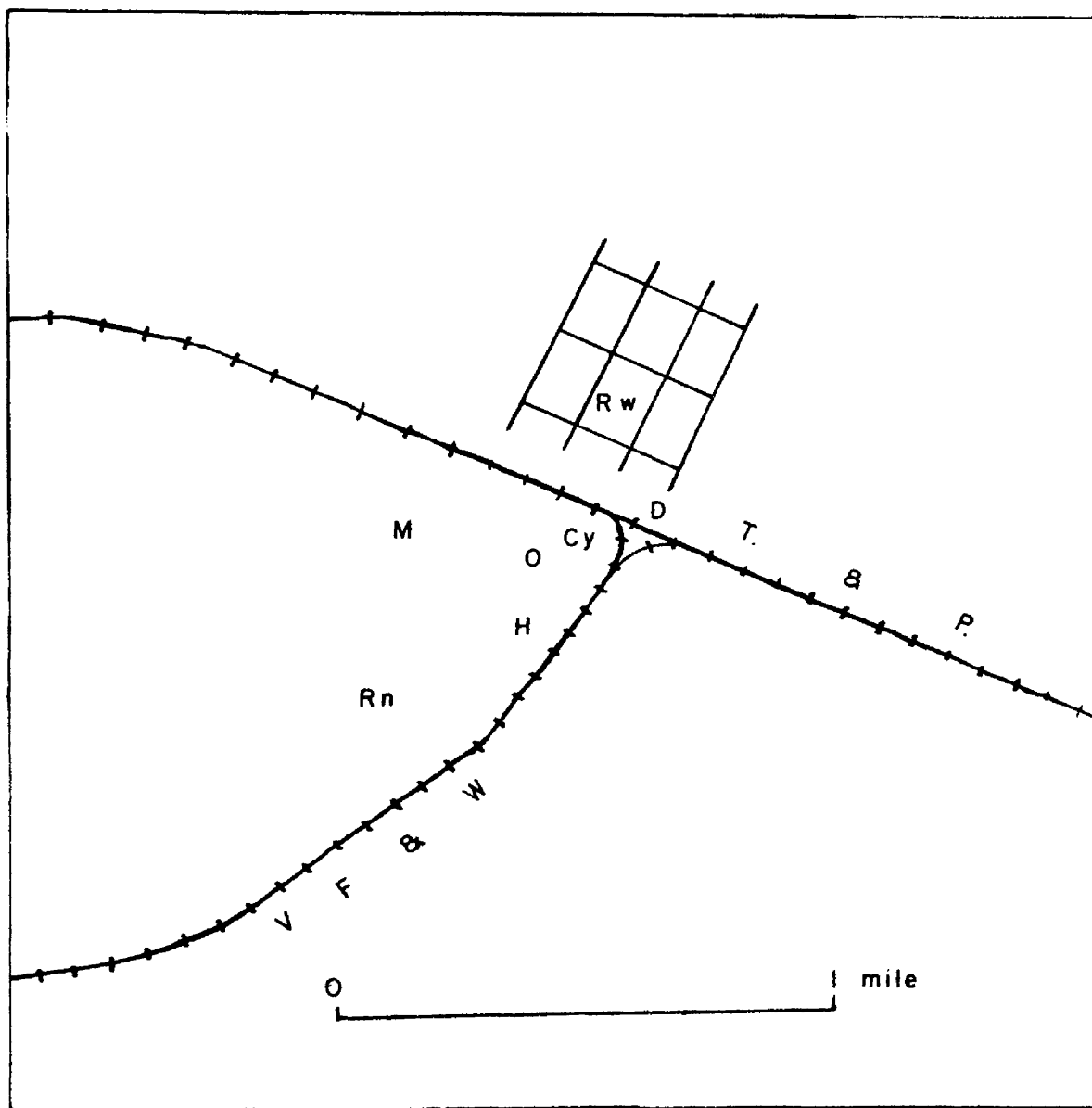
Some doubt exists as to the exact date Victoria was established, but according to some accounts this was the site of a small sawmill operated as early as 1882 by the Victoria Lumber Company. Hardee's map of 1895 marks the site, identifying it as "Victoria Mills." About 1898 the place was purchased by the Louisiana Longleaf Lumber Company, and large-scale operations were begun. The mill cut out in 1936, most of the establishment being absorbed by neighboring Fisher.

The mill assembly included a pine mill, planer mill, dry kilns, lumber yard, corral, barn, machine shop, and mill pond. A standpipe and generators at the mill furnished water and lights to the entire settlement.

Many Victoria residents were brought by the company from Greenville, Missouri. At the most, the inhabitants numbered about 1,500, white and Negro.

Boarding houses and schools were set up for both white and colored residents, and in the business district there was a commissary, the mill offices, a depot, a combined doctor's office and drug store, a barber shop, and a post office.

The two principal types of company houses were the pyramidal and shotgun, occupied by whites and Negroes respectively.



Cy - COMMISSARY

D - DEPOT

H - HOTEL

M - MILL

O - OFFICE

Rw - RESIDENTIAL, WHITE

VICTORIA

Natchitoches Parish, La.

plate XXVII



Figure 84: View of Victoria site.



Figure 85: View of Victoria site.

WARD

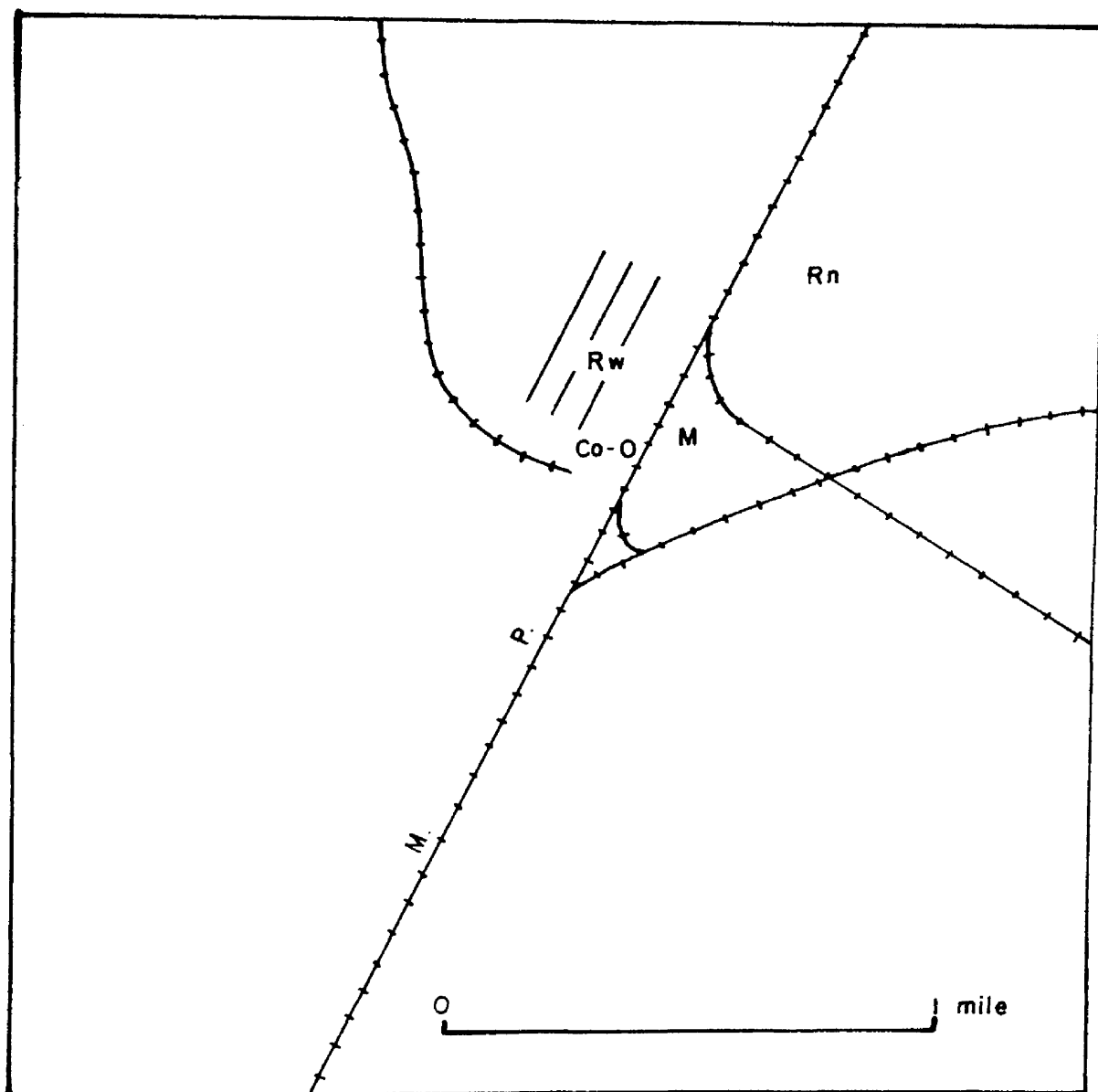
In 1905 the Rice and Ward Lumber Company established Ward in Allen Parish on the Missouri Pacific Railway, about eight miles north of Oberlin. Work there continued until 1917, interrupted only by the panic of 1907.

The first families to come to Ward were brought by the company from Hyatt in east Texas. A small mill was erected and immediately employed at cutting lumber for the larger mill and the town. By the time the main plant was completed the entire settlement was ready for occupancy.

At the mill, which had a daily capacity of about 80,000 board feet, there were pine and planer mills, dry kilns, a lumber yard, machine shop, barn, and corral. The barn was a single-story structure resembling a bungalow, roughly forty feet wide and sixty feet long. It was enclosed in a corral, and another corral was maintained at the front. Mules were used in both locations. The mill pond was fed by a deep well at the mill, and in unusually dry weather water was brought by pipeline from the Calcasieu River, about a mile to the west. Generators at the mill provided electricity for the town, but the standpipe there furnished water to the mill only. Dug wells with hand pumps were the main source of water in residential areas.

In the town there were boarding houses for whites and Negroes, as well as schools. The Negroes built a church for their own use, while white residents conducted services in their school building. Other establishments in the settlement included the company offices, a doctor's office, a barber shop, and post office.

About 500 men were employed at Ward, in the woods or at the mill. White employees were quartered in bungalows, while Negroes lived in both single log-pen and shotgun houses. For the most part these company houses were unpainted, and very simply constructed.



Co-O - COMMISSARY & OFFICE

M - MILL

Rw - RESIDENTIAL, WHITE

Rn - RESIDENTIAL, NEGRO

WARD

Allen Parish, La.



Figure 86: Abandoned right-of-way near Ward. Now used by motor vehicles.

WOODWORTH

Woodworth, Rapides Parish, was a company town built by the Rapides Lumber Company just prior to 1900. In 1910 ownership passed to the Long Bell Lumber Company, and operations there ceased in 1926. The Woodworth mill was a large one, with a reported capacity of 125,000 board feet daily. It cut only pine, and when supplies of that timber were exhausted the plant was closed.

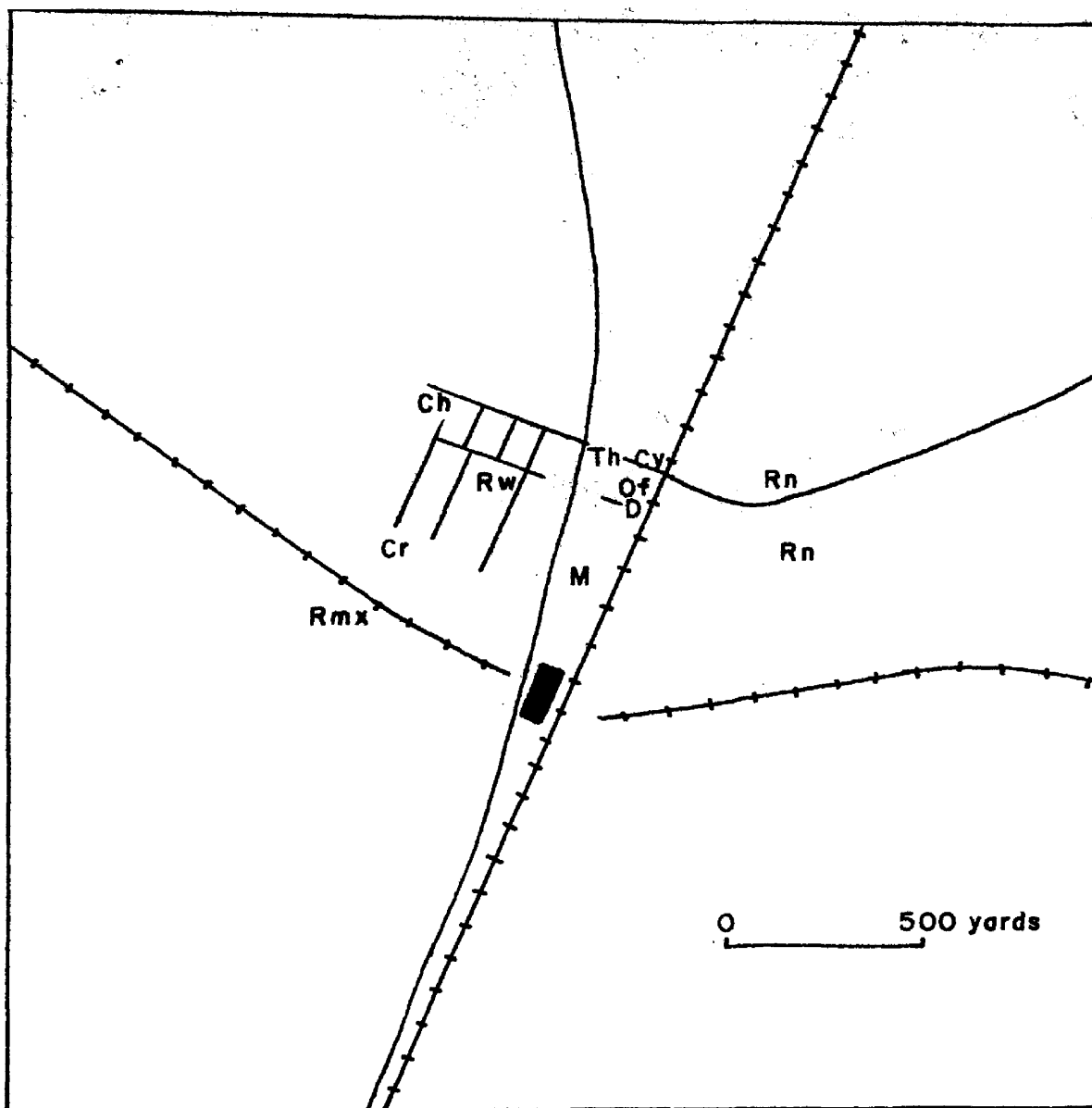
The mill assembly included a pine mill, planer mill, dry kilns, machine shop, mill pond, barn, two corrals, a lumber yard, and a lumber shed capable of sheltering a million board feet of lumber. Generators at the mill furnished electricity for the entire settlement, and running water went to all homes from the mill standpipe.

Woodworth included a hotel, a boarding house and school for whites, and a boarding house and school for Negroes. The usual company offices were present, along with a commissary, an ice house, and a warehouse which served as a depot. Churches for both races, a doctor's office, drug store, barber shop, theater, post office, and white and Negro cemeteries completed the settlement.

The labor force at Woodworth was, for the most part, recruited from local sources. Only two exceptions were noted: a group of whites brought from Atlanta, Texas, about 1900,

and a small group of Mexican laborers. The latter never numbered more than 100 and were chiefly employed at heavy work in the lumber yard, dry kilns, or track maintenance. They lived in a quarter segregated from both whites and Negroes, and did not remain long in service at Woodworth.

House types were of two principal kinds: pyramidal and shotgun. Pyramidal dwellings were occupied by white families, and apparently were well built and comfortable. Many were enlarged by the addition of rooms at the rear. Most were painted white. Negro homes were of the shotgun type, three rooms deep, and unpainted. Such houses were used at the camps as well as in town.



Ch - CHURCH

Cr - CORRAL

Cy - COMMISSARY

D - DEPOT

M - MILL

Of - OFFICE

Rw - RESIDENTIAL, WHITE

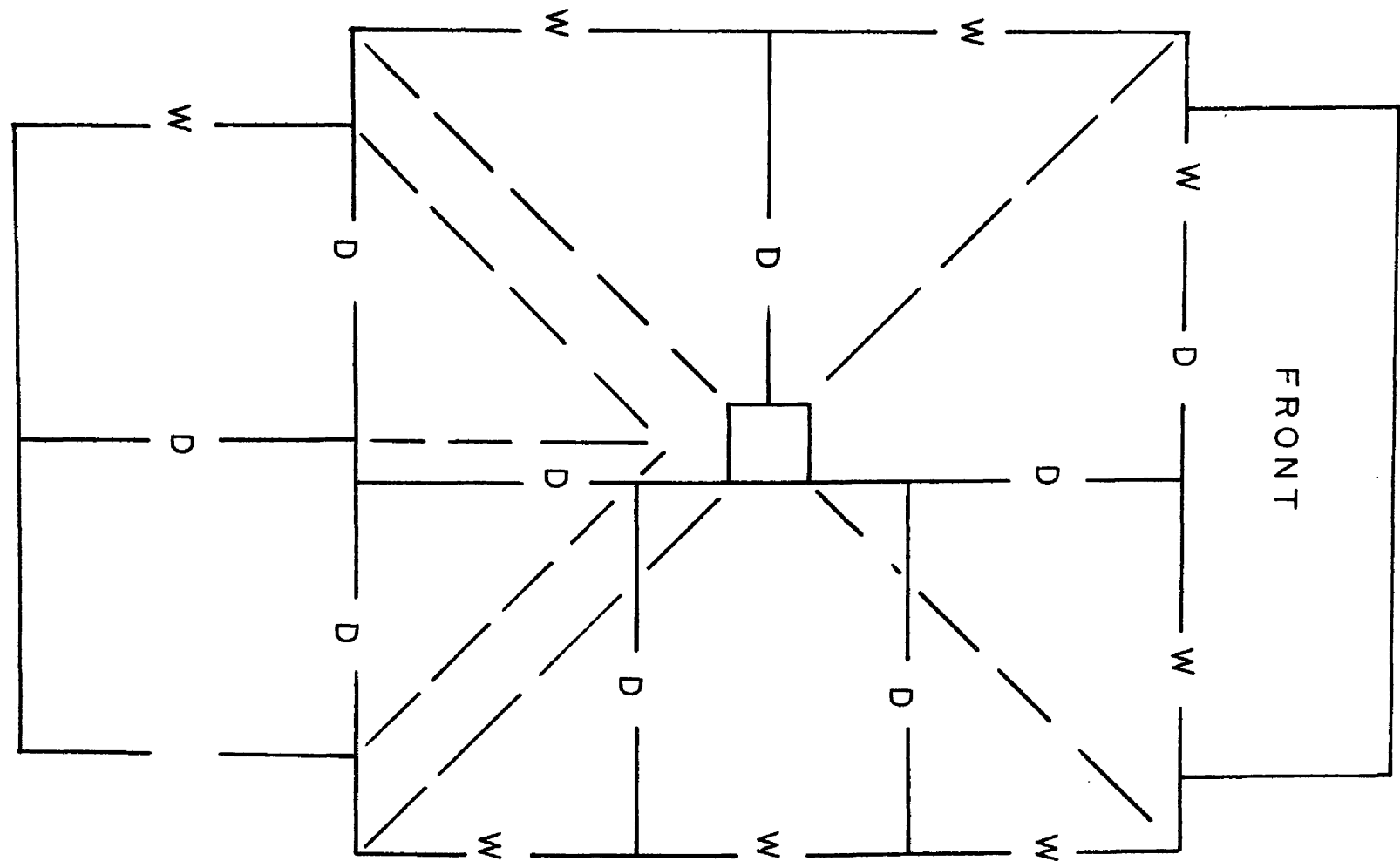
Rn - RESIDENTIAL, NEGRO

Rmx - RESIDENTIAL, MEXICAN

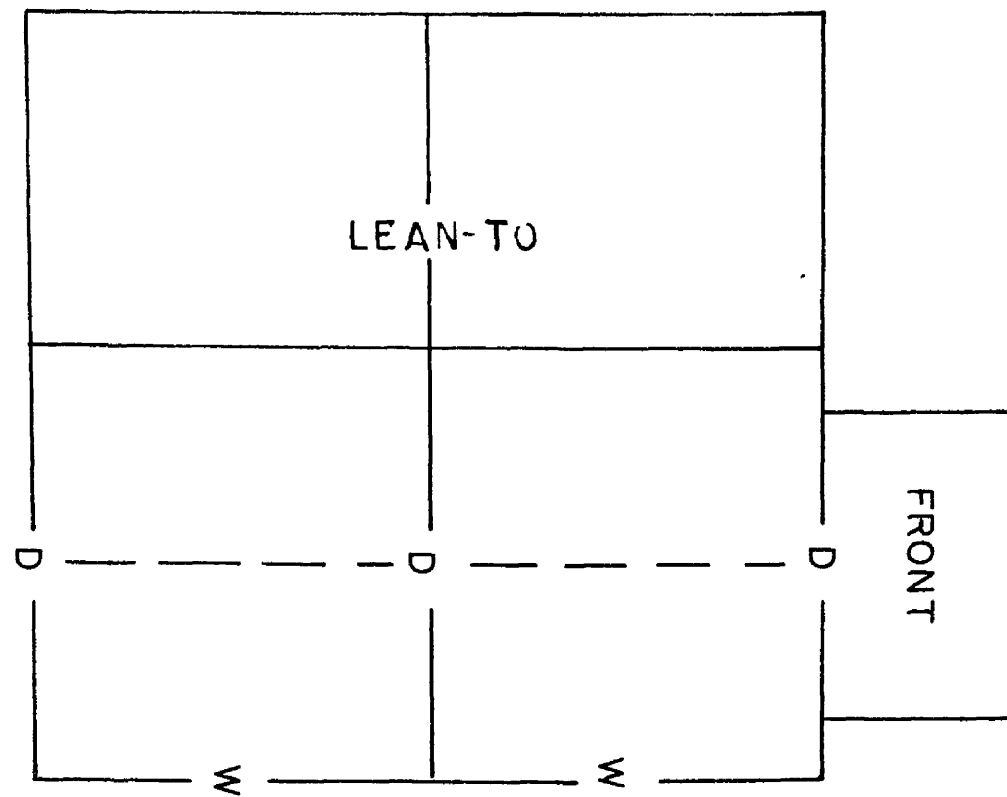
WOODWORTH

Rapides Parish, La.

Plate XXXIX



Company House Floor Plan
WOODWORTH PYRAMIDAL



Company House Floor Plan
WOODWORTH SHOTGUN

1" = 5'



Figure 87: Woodworth company house, pyramidal type.



Figure 88: Woodworth company house, shotgun type.

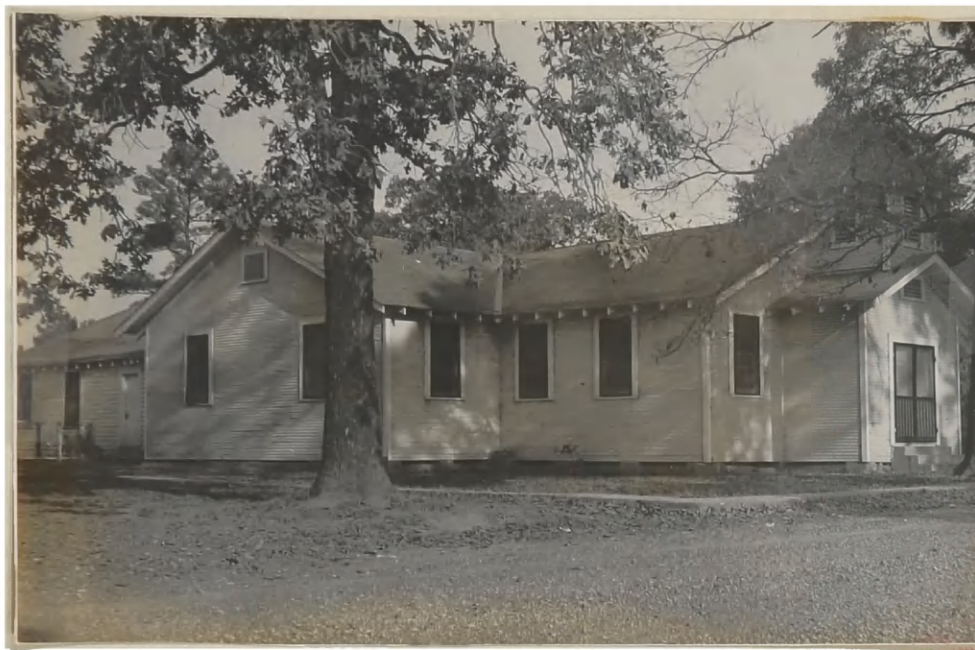


Figure 89: Woodward church.



Figure 90: Woodward company vault.

APPENDIX B

GLOSSARY

APPENDIX E

GLOSSARY

bungalow: house type adopted in lumber industry as form of company housing. Previously known in south Louisiana. Generally two rooms wide, two or more deep, with gables facing front and rear.

company house: residence built and rented by company to employees.

company town: settlement built, owned, and administered by company.

corral: small area, enclosed by board fence, where animals were kept. Usually included a barn. Sometimes built at the front.

front: area in forest where logging is actually in progress.

logging spur: standard-gauge rail line from main line to mill or toward front.

logging tram: standard-gauge rail line from mill to front.

log-pen house: evolved from early log cabins of pine hills, and adopted in company housing.

lumber camp: small establishment near the front supporting woods crews. Some very small, others large, with store and other facilities.

pyramidal house: house type brought from north by lumber industry, and widely used in company housing. Square, with roof sloping from all sides toward central peak or ridge.

sawmill town: a town dependent upon a sawmill for existence.

shotgun house: widely used in company housing. Already known in south Louisiana, and brought in from north by lumber industry. One room wide, two or more deep, with gables facing front and rear.

sleeping quarter: building for sleeping purposes only, usually for men of lower rank. Meals were not served.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

George Alwin Stokes was born December 29th, 1920, at Winnfield, Louisiana. His elementary and high school education was received at Winnfield High School, from which he graduated in 1937.

He was awarded the Bachelor of Arts degree by the then Louisiana State Normal College, Natchitoches, Louisiana, in 1942. His major study there was history, and he earned a minor in geography.

In 1946 he entered the Graduate School of Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Geography constituted his major study there, and he was awarded the degree of Master of Science in 1949. In that same year he was elected to membership in the Society of the Sigma Xi.

Following graduation he accepted the appointment he now holds, that of Assistant Professor of Geography and Geology at Northwestern State College, Natchitoches, Louisiana.

EXAMINATION AND THESIS REPORT

Candidate: George Alwin Stokes

Major Field: Geography

Title of Thesis: Lumbering in Southwest Louisiana: A Study of
the Industry as a Culturo-Geographic Factor

Approved:

Fred Kriffen.

Major Professor and Chairman

Richard J. Russell

Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

Richard J. Russell

William G. Haag

John H. Vann

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Robert West

Date of Examination:

May 5, 1954